

14-year-old Filipino newest grandmaster, world's 7th youngest

By Roy Luarca

IT TOOK A LITTLE LONGER, BUT Wesley So finally became a Grandmaster yesterday. The Filipino sensation drew with Iranian GM Ehsan Ghaem Maghami in the ninth and final round of the third Prospero Cup International Open chess championship to complete the requirements for the coveted title at 14 years, one month.

14-YEAR-OLD/A19

RAISE HIGH THE FLAG: The Philippine delegation parades down the stadium in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, for the opening ceremonies of the 2007 Southeast Asian Games on Friday. The 11-day SEA Games started on Thursday to coincide with the 80th birthday of the Thai's beloved king.

RAFFY LEON/A4

Gov't loses case vs Tan

Rape victim 'very upset' over Jalosjos' release plan

By Lella B. Salaverria and Beverly T. Natividad

SHE WAS 11 YEARS OLD WHEN she was raped. Now, in her 20s and working somewhere, she is angry again.

"She has e-mailed the DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development). She's very upset. She can't believe it's happening," lawyer Katrina Legarda said of her former ward. "Wala na siya magagawa (There's nothing she can do anymore)."

Legarda was referring to the girl whose court testimony con-

RAPE VICTIM/A10



PRESIDENT Arroyo and husband Jose Miguel Arroyo are received by the British monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, at Buckingham Palace in central London. Ms. Arroyo ended her official visit in the UK on Thursday, and with her family returned to Spain for a private visit.

SC: Sequestration order 'null and void'

By Lella B. Salaverria

TOBACCO TYCOON LUCIO TAN SCORED A MAJOR victory against the government after the Supreme Court upheld a Sandiganbayan ruling that there was no basis for the seizure of Tan's assets in four companies, including his flagship Fortune Tobacco Corp., in 1986.

In upholding the Sandiganbayan ruling in favor of Tan and several others, the high court said the Presidential Commission on Good Government failed to show that it had evidence that the shares in the companies were ill-gotten before it issued the sequestration orders.

The high court said it found that the PCGG—the agency created in 1986 to recover the ill-gotten assets of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, his family and his cronies—had no sufficient reason to take over the shares.

"There is no evidence pre-

sented by petitioner that they belong to the Government of the Philippines or any of its branches, instrumentalities, enterprises, banks or financial institutions.

"Nor is there evidence that respondents, taking undue advantage of their connections or relationship with former President Marcos or his family, relatives and close associates, were able to acquire those shares of stock," the high court said in its Dec. 7 decision.

The Supreme Court was acting on a petition from the PCGG

GOV'T LOSES/A9

Lim: I was forced to join Trillanes

By DJ Yap and Nikko Dizon

BRIG. GEN. DANILO LIM SAYS he was "forcibly dragged out" of court to join the Trillanes walk-out.

He has asked the Makati court hearing the rebellion case against the Trillanes group that took over portions of the Peninsula Manila on Nov. 29 to order his return to the Camp Capinpin custodial center in Tanay, Rizal, where he was originally detained.

Lim, who had joined the group

GENERAL LIM/A8

GMA to Kuwait trying to save OFW

By Michael Lim Ubac

LONDON (VIA PLDT)—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo may yet save Marilou Ranario's life, but the President's lips are sealed, for now.

Ms. Arroyo yesterday decided to cut short her and her family's planned two-day private visit to Spain, scheduled for Dec. 7 to 8, to be able to personally appeal the case of Ranario, the overseas worker who has been sentenced to die by hanging for the fatal stabbing of her employer.

Ms. Arroyo and the emir of Kuwait, Shaikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah, will meet Sunday in Kuwait. She is expected to plead for the life of the 33-year-old teacher, who worked in that country as a domestic helper.

Previously, it was uncertain if Ms. Arroyo would push through with her trip to Kuwait.

Yesterday, she confirmed the trip, politely nodding after she was asked by reporters if she was flying to Kuwait.

She did not elaborate but she was beaming while she was be-

ing led out of the Dorchester Hotel, where she had spoken before top British businessmen about the improving business climate in the Philippines.

On Wednesday, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye had told reporters covering the presidential visits to Spain and the United Kingdom that the Kuwait trip would not push through.

Then, the following day, Bunye said that "it's a go," but he would not comment on the pos-

GMA GOING/A10

Cops block Palace march; farmers weep

By Allison W. Lopez

FARMERS WHO HAD marched 1,700 kilometers to call the government's attention to their claim to an estate in Sumilao, Bukidnon, wept in frustration yesterday as police blocked their attempt to reach Malacañang.

Sunburned and exhausted, the farmers, including Hilda San Ahan, 58, the oldest in the

group, sat on the pavement of Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard near A.H. Lacson Street and waited to be allowed to proceed. Around 30 Manila policemen bearing shields stopped them from crossing over to the J.R. Laurel gate at around 11:30 a.m.

The farmers had walked from the central office of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)

COFS/A18

After accounting mixup, '1/4 Filipino' is Miss California

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIF.—In the business of crowning beauty queens, there's one thing you'd think they'd get right: Crowning the right beauty queen. Miss California USA organizers say they got that wrong, but corrected themselves Thursday by crowning Miss Barstow, Raquel Beezley, a 21-year-old waitress they said rightfully earned the title.



And they tried to put an end to a kerfuffle that began last month when they crowned

AFTER/A18

Luminous Cross rising in small Quezon town on wings of hope, prayer

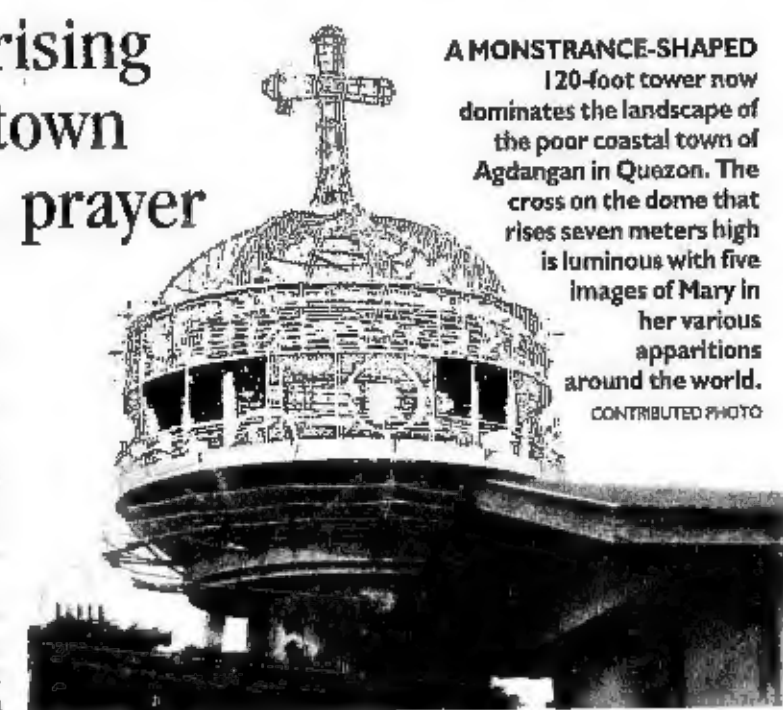
By Ruby Villavicencio-Paurom

SLOWLY AND STEADFASTLY, A PRAYER tower rises in a small town in Quezon.

What was then deemed impossible to build in this poor coastal town of Agdangan in the Bondoc Peninsula, a monstrosity-shaped, 37-meter-high sanctuary, called the Luminous Cross of Grace, rises after three years of hope, prayers and thanksgiving for donors and service contributors.

Constructed beside the St. Isidore Parish Church, the prayer tower juts into the sky, a testament to the perseverance and faith of a

LUMINOUS/A8



A MONSTRANCE-SHAPED 120-foot tower now dominates the landscape of the poor coastal town of Agdangan in Quezon. The cross on the dome that rises seven meters high is luminous with five images of Mary in her various apparitions around the world.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A jab at Trillanes was dying writer's last literary gasp

By Gerry Plaza Contributor

A SERIOUS JAB AT "ADVENTURIST" Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV was his last literary gasp.

Rene O. Villanueva, award-winning writer of "Batibot," the Philippines' "Sesame Street," despite his failing health, made one final entry in his personal blog, expressing disdain for the latest Trillanes caper at the Peninsula Manila on Nov. 29.

According to his entry, he roused from his sickbed to

A JAB/A9

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Palawan	Partly Cloudy
Batangas	Partly Cloudy	Quezon	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rain	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laos	Partly Cloudy	Yosoteba	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Que. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tegaylay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legaspi	Cloudy with Rain	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Cebu	Partly Cloudy	Surigao	Partly Cloudy

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RP back in business – GMA

'Sick man of Asia' not afraid of globalization, says Arroyo

By Michael Lim Ubac

LONDON (VIA PLDT)—THE Philippines is no longer afraid of globalization, President Macapagal-Arroyo declared here late Thursday at the close of her week-long official visit to Spain and the United Kingdom.

The country, which less than a decade ago was referred to as "the sick man of Asia," was back in business, and the world has taken notice, Ms Arroyo said.

She invited European investors to visit the Philippines to "see for yourself the dynamism that now describes our country today."

"We are a good business environment but we are getting better," she said, eliciting applause from top British investors here led by HSBC's Robert Gray who said the Arroyo administration's determination to "bring prosperity to your people is praised worldwide."

The first one to respond to her call was Indian steel magnate Pramod Mittal who finally gave the go-signal for the implementation of a P1.6-billion integrated steel plant in the Philippines, a project that was announced during the state visit she made to India last October.

Mittal's Ispat Industries, acquired Global Steelworks Phil., the former National Steel Corp., in 2004 for \$225 million. Based in Iligan

City, it is the country's largest steel mill with an annual output of three million metric tons, supplying cold rolled coils and flat steel products to the Philippines and other countries.

Ms Arroyo arrived in London late Wednesday from a four-day state visit to Spain, which began Dec. 2. She met King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia, and generated P16.2 billion in fresh investments for the Philippines.

She addressed two separate business forums during her one-day visit to London, during which she cited the many positive developments in the Philippine business scene that have caught the attention of global investors.

She regaled the London business community with the bright prospects awaiting investors in mining, energy, tourism, business process outsourcing, infrastructure and agriculture-related projects in the Philippines.

"I believe that Philippines offers one of the best values in Asia for domestic and foreign investments," she said.

She pointed out that the Philippine economy has reached a "new level of maturity and stability, with some of the strongest macro-economic fundamentals in 20 years."

She cited the huge investments by such international business giants as Texas Instruments of the United States, Hanjin of Korea, Marubeni of Japan are pouring in. Together with Anglo-Dutch Shell Co., they form the "Billion Club" of investors who have sunk in at least a billion dollars in their Philippine operations, the President said.

LONDON (VIA PLDT)—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has weathered countless political storms since assuming power in 2001, but she told British investors here that she is a bad politician.

"I think I'm a pretty good economist, but a very bad politician," the US-educated economist said in a speech at an investors' forum here which capped her one-day working visit to the United Kingdom.

Ms Arroyo said she was focusing on the economy "because it has to be done, and also because on a personal level, as an economist, that's my zone of comfort."

"And whatever you may read in the headlines about the Philippines, be assured that we don't satisfy long-term gains for short-term political expediency. That's the meaning of being focused on the economy," she told investors.

The President explained to

global investors based in the British capital that last week's failed Makati coup signaled an end to the era of mutinies and power grabs.

She said that there would be no more threats to her presidency until the end of her presidency in 2010.

She said the Filipino people wanted order, stability and economic progress, and "that's what they're getting now." **Michael Lim Ubac**

WHAT'S INSIDE

US DELAYS
deportation of prominent RP couple

/A4

CHEAP
medicine bill will pass

/A6

Hunt other Pen rebels, PNP told

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday ordered the police and military to continue pursuing the other participants of the failed Nov. 29 revolt at the Peninsula Manila even as they assured her that the threat in the country had been "virtually handled."

From Sevilla, Spain where she was on a private visit, the President issued this and other directives in a video conference she held with her Cabinet national security cluster, who met at the Makati Shangri-la hotel.

"We must remain vigilant against groups exploiting grievances to grab pow-

er for their own selfish ambitions," Ms Arroyo said in her opening statement at the meeting which was also aired live on government television and radio stations.

The Chief Executive also ordered the officials to review security measures in the country.

"People are grateful to our soldiers and policemen for defending democracy and the Constitution," she added.

Interior and Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno briefed Ms Arroyo, who left for Europe two days after the failed Nov. 29 revolt, that the "security situation in the country is good and we believed that the threat was virtually handled."

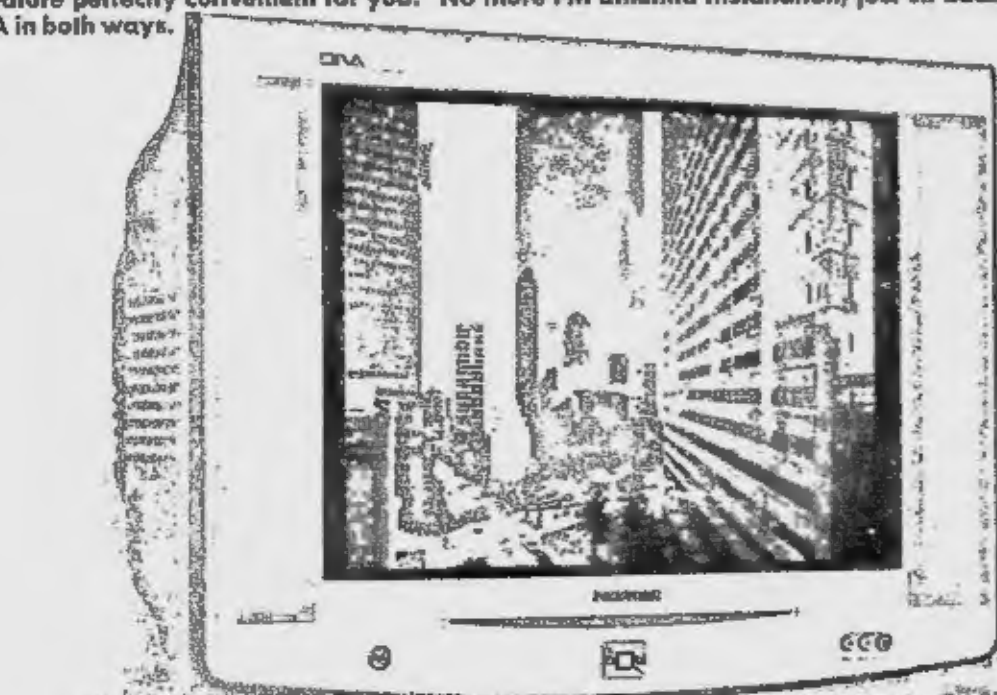
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POLYTRON

Philippine Quill Honors Globe's Efforts for OFW Families

In recognizing Mrs. Corazon Gaviola-Atuel, Mr. Oscar De Jesus, Jr. and Mrs. Virgencita Lagunsay as this year's Model OFW Family of the Year awardees, Globe Telecom found itself receiving an award as well. The prestigious 2007 Quill Award was recently given to the pioneering telecommunications company for its MOFYA campaign at the Philippine Quill's 35th Annual Awards night held at the Mandarin Oriental Manila.

Winning the Award of Excellence in the 2007 Quill specifically on the category of economic, social & environment development, Globe executed its communication campaign through print ads, TV segment sponsorships and OWWA radio announcements & guestings on AM radio.

Globe's clear objectives, understanding of the target market, creative & effective communication efforts and, ultimately, the measurable results of the program's success impressed a jury of business executives and professionals throughout the industry.

Globe has long sought to recognize and demonstrate appreciation for OFW families, who have endured and thrived despite the struggle of being separated from their loved ones. With this in mind, Globe partnered with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) to support OWWA's similar vision of recognizing the sacrifices of overseas workers, giving due credit to the OFWs and their families for the solid contribution they make to our country.

In addition to the MOFYA program, Globe continues to honor Filipino workers abroad and their relatives here at home through the annual Pamaskong handog program, the OFW Family Fairs. This event is a whole-day family affair providing entertainment, games, prizes & special gifts from Globe to overseas workers and their relatives, giving them a truly happy and memorable Christmas reunion.



Globe bags a total of 12 awards at the 2007 Philippine Quill Awards held at the Mandarin Oriental Manila.



Moreover, Globe has developed a comprehensive series of events and offers to keep OFWs and their families connected during their stay. Upon arrival at the NAIA, OFW balikbayans are given the VIP Welcome treatment with the OFW Airport Salubong. President GMA herself will open the event, while TV celebrities are stationed at the NAIA along with Globe reps to give away Globe gift packs and special items to OFW balikbayans throughout the Christmas season.



Furthermore, Globe has developed the OFW Family Pack, the first 2-SIM bundle containing partner OFW and Family SIMs at an affordable cost. This product has been developed to ensure that OFW families stay connected despite the distance.



The Quill award is tangible proof that Globe's continued commitment to nation building and development is beginning to bear fruit. From acknowledging and paying tribute to Filipino overseas workers and their loved ones, to giving them affordable rates on calls and text messages that lift the spirit, Globe does everything possible to make everyday life easier, simpler and richer for all OFWs and their families.



Saludo ang Globe sa mga huwarang pamilyang OFW

Corazon Gaviola-Atuel. Maybahay, Public Servant.
Oscar De Jesus, Jr. Seaman, Ama, Entrepreneur.
Virgencita Lagunsay. Domestic helper, Ina, Peacekeeper.

Silang tatlo ang mga pinuno't tagapag-kalinga ng kanilang mga pamilya, ang nagpapa-aral sa kanilang mga anak, at tagapangalaga ng kanilang kinabukasan.

At dahil nangunguna sila sa mga gawaing pampamayanan, sila rin ang nagsisilbing inspirasyon para sa ibang pamilya sa kanilang paligid.

At sa ating lahat.

Silang tatlo ang 2007 awardees ng Model OFW Family of The Year.
Saludo po ang Globe sa inyo!

MOFYA
Model OFW Family of the Year Awards

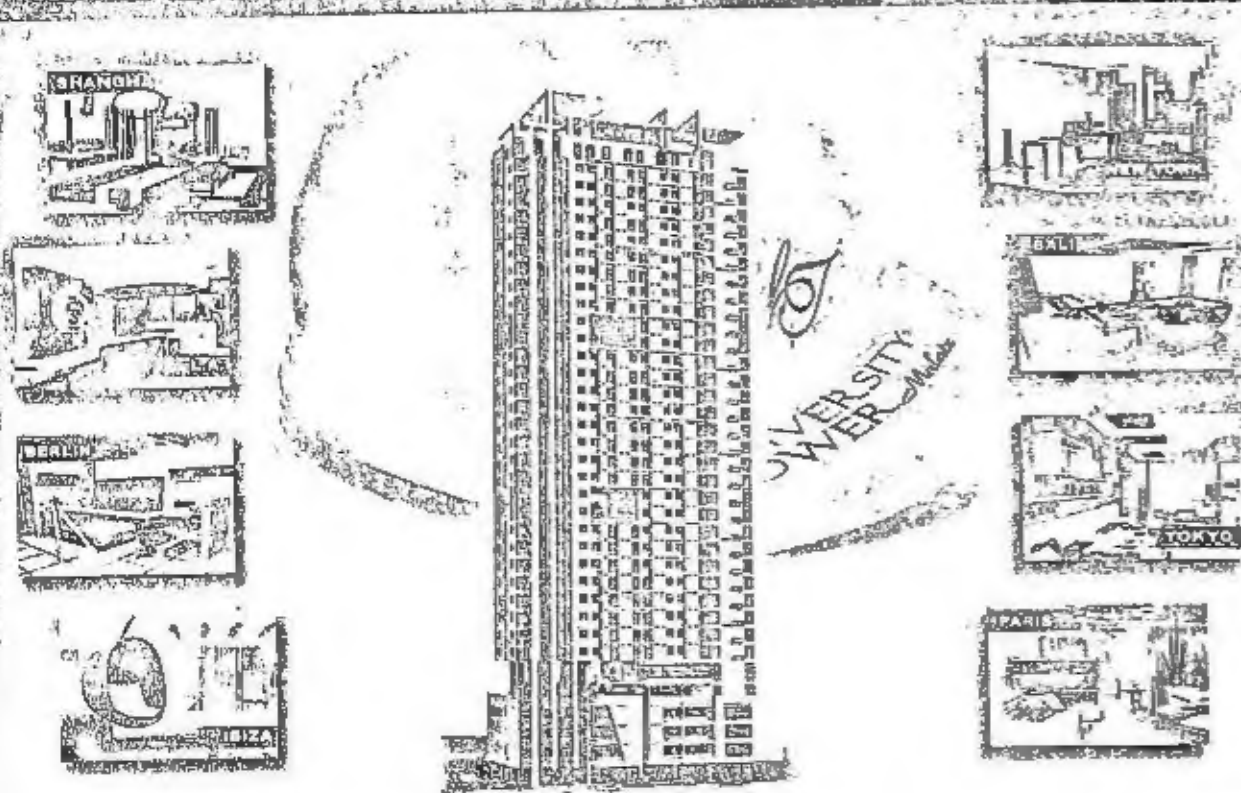


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US delays deportation of prominent RP couple

PHILADELPHIA—FEDERAL OFFICIALS have temporarily stayed deportation proceedings for an immigrant doctor and his wife who had been ordered to go to the Philippines because of a long-ago error on their paperwork, the couple's attorney said.

Dr. Pedro Servano and his wife, Salvacion, of Selinsgrove, were granted their request for deferred action, which allows them to continue living and working in the US for an unspecified amount of time, lawyer Gregg Cotler said Thursday.

"This gives us formal delay and stay of the deportation," Cotler said.

Immigrations and Customs Enforcement spokesperson Michael Gilhooly confirmed that officials in Philadelphia granted the deferred action. Deportation proceedings for the Servanos had begun Nov. 26 after all their appeals were exhausted.

"At this time, we'll not enforce the removal orders while they pursue other options," Gilhooly said Thursday.

The Servanos, parents of four US citizens and prominent members of their central Pennsylvania community, could be deported to their native Philippines because of a change in their marital status during their visa-application process more than 20 years ago.

They were single when they applied but married when the visas were granted; US officials were never told of the change.

Supporters of the family say the Servanos have been model immigrants since their arrival in the mid-1980s, and their story has led to an outpouring of support from around the country.

Pedro Servano, 54, is a family physician in Selinsgrove, an underserved area of central Pennsylvania about 100 miles northwest of Philadelphia; Salvacion, 51, runs an Asian grocery store and bakery. Two of their four children are college graduates, while two are still in secondary school.

On Thursday, Servano said the deferred action is "giving us hope."

"That's a positive move," he said. "We are just very thankful."

Pennsylvania's federal lawmakers continue to work on the case with the family and government officials, Cotler said Thursday. Special congressional legislation is the Servanos' last hope for being able to remain in the country, he said.

Cotler said the request for deferred action, which was granted Wednesday, is a recognition by immigration officials that there is "something extraordinary" about the Servanos' case.

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Basic Photoshop Create and enhance stunning images by learning Photoshop basics	January 12 to 14
Acting for TV and Film - Kids Get your kids to be comfortable in front of a cam and on the spotlight	January 12, 19 and 26
Sinulog Series - Digital Video Editing Celebrate the Sinulog Festival frame-by-frame through Digital Video Editing	January 14 to 19
Sinulog Series - HD Cinematography Bring out the color of the Sinulog Festival with a crash course in High Definition Cinematography	January 18 to 19
Sinulog Series - Digital Photography Capture the color of the Sinulog Festival with Digital Photography	January 18 to 21
Acting from the Ground Up - Teens Kick-start your acting career early by learning the basics	January 18 to 20
Teacher Development Program - Stage Directing Put together a sophisticated school production with a specialized course for teachers	January 25 to 27
Stage Management and Production Get hands-on training in managing your own stage production from plays to concerts and special events	January 25 to 27
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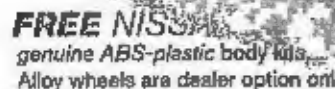
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Neri says Palace barred him from testifying

By Dona Pazzibugan

FORMER SOCIO-ECONOMIC Planning Secretary Romulo Neri has told the Senate he was prevented by Malacañang from attending further Senate hearings on the aborted \$329 million National Broadband Network deal with China's ZTE Corp.

Neri pointed to Malacañang

in his reply to the Senate's Nov. 20 order for him to explain why he should not be cited for contempt for snubbing the Senate hearings.

"He claimed he's being prevented by the executive (department)," said Sen. Alan Cayetano, chair of the Senate blue ribbon committee that leads the joint inquiry.

Cayetano did not give further

details and declined to give a copy of Neri's reply. The blue ribbon committee is reportedly in the process of giving other committee members copies of Neri's letter along with other documents related to the NBN deal.

The Senate inquiry into the alleged bribery and overpricing in the \$329 million loan deal with China has forced President Macapagal-Arroyo to cancel the

deal altogether.

In his Senate testimony, Neri said former Commission on Elections Benjamin Abalos tried to bribe him P200 million to approve the project. He, however, invoked "executive privilege" when he was asked about his conversations with the President on the deal.

Before the ZTE deal scandal, he was reassigned as chair of

the Commission on Higher Education.

Losing project proponent Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, son of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., also told the Senate Abalos tried to bribe him \$10 million to back out of the project. He also implicated the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, Abotiz Transport System CEO Endika Abotiz and International Con-

tainer and Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) chair Enrique Razon Jr. in the controversial deal.

Abalos resigned from his post even as he denied the bribery allegations.

At the last hearing on Nov. 20, the Senate ordered Neri to show cause why he should not be cited for contempt after he ignored a Senate subpoena to attend the hearing that day.

SPEAKER'S ASSURANCE

'Cheap medicine bill will pass'

By Norman Bordadora

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA YESTERDAY said the House of Representatives will pass the cheaper medicines bill before Congress goes on Christmas recess on Dec. 22.

And if his prayer is answered, the bill will be approved by the bicameral conference committee before the break.

"The two chambers will have approved it before the break and we're praying for both sides to get past the bicam before Christmas," De Venecia said in an interview.

"Otherwise, it will be (passed on) the last week of January or early February," he added.

De Venecia belied reports that the House had succumbed to the intense lobby of multinational pharmaceutical firms to delay, water down or even archive the piece of

legislation meant to make medicines more affordable in the country.

"We agreed last night that we will give priority to the cheap medicines bill and that we will approve it Tuesday night or Wednesday afternoon next week," De Venecia said.

De Venecia said he had a meeting with representatives of the parties of the majority coalition in the House on Thursday night.

Iloilo Rep. Perjel Biron, vice chair of the House committee on health and a principal author of the bill, said on radio station dzBB that he received De Venecia's commitment that the bill would be passed on Wednesday next week.

"There's no truth to the insinuations that the bill will be killed that we will succumb to pharmaceuticals lobby that we cannot pass before we go on recess. That's black propaganda," De Venecia said.

"It can be presented before the bicam before the break. Definitely," he added.

Asked about the bill becoming a watered down version that may instead be used by pharmaceutical firms for their advantage, De Venecia said: "The important thing is that it will bring down prices of medicines for the great masses for patented and non-patented medicines."

"That's the bottom line," he added.

The cheap medicines bill was supposed to have been passed as early as toward the end of the 13th Congress but has been experiencing delays since the 14th Congress convened in August.

Biron has said that one congressman has been raising too many concerns on the floor and appears intent on blocking the passage of the measure.

Gov't defense lawyers lock horns on Pen video

By DJ Yap and Nildo Dizon

DEFENSE LAWYERS AND prosecutors locked horns yesterday over the admissibility as evidence of a digital video disc (DVD) containing television footage of the Peninsula Manila takeover in the first hearing of the rebellion case.

Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco told Judge Elmo Alameda of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 that he intended to submit as evidence a copy of the DVD, which contained television station ANC's hour-by-hour coverage of the Nov. 29 standoff, when a group of junior officers, civilian personalities and lawyers led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Army Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim occupied the hotel for six hours.

But Theodore Te, counsel for Bishop Julio Labayan and former University of the Philippines president Francisco Nemenzo, said the piece of evidence should not be ad-

mitted as its existence was not divulged during the inquest.

"This diskette or DVD was not referred to, never shown to us, never indicated to us during the five-hour inquest. Going over the evidence, it was not even mentioned," Te said.

Velasco argued that the Department of Justice resolution finding basis to charge Trillanes and his group for rebellion had specifically cited the ANC footage as basis for some of the allegations.

Aside from Trillanes, also charged with rebellion were former Vice President Teofisto Guingona and 34 other military officers, Church officials and civilians linked to the takeover.

None of the detained accused attended the hearing since the defense lawyers who filed four separate motions only on Thursday had not been able to secure court orders for their clients' appearance.

Te said the DVD should not be admitted since the defense never had

the chance to question its authenticity and would pose an "undue surprise" to the defense.

Ernesto Francisco Jr., a collaborating counsel for Guingona, noted that the DVD was not even included in the list of documentary evidence that was attached to the case information filed in court.

Alameda said he would rule on the admissibility of the DVD in 10 days.

Also yesterday, the Philippine National Police said it was initiating another round of meeting with media representatives in the hope of forging an agreement regarding guidelines on covering crisis situations like the hotel siege to avoid endangering lives and the obstruction of justice.

At the same time, PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdila said, investigators could ask reporters who covered the standoff to be witnesses against the group of rebels.

E. Visayas jolted by mild quake

By TJ Burgonio

MILD TO STRONGLY moderate earthquakes yesterday struck Visayas, Cebu and a part of Metro Manila, but did not cause damage to life and property, the country's volcanologists said.

A 5.4 magnitude earthquake occurred offshore 93 km off Borongan, Eastern Samar at around 5:43 a.m. It originated from a fault, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Intensity 4 was felt in Borongan and Catubig in Northern Samar, while Intensity 3 was recorded in Palo and Tacloban, Leyte.

"We haven't received any report of damage," Phivolcs director Renato Solidum said in a phone interview. He said the quake did not trigger a tsunami. "It was too moderate to trigger a tsunami."

For it to trigger a tsunami, an offshore earthquake should have a magnitude of close to 7, and a depth of less than 30 km, he said.

Hours earlier, a 3.5 magnitude earthquake occurred in the Sierra Madre mountain range in Aurora. Intensity 2 was felt in Quezon City, according to Phivolcs.

"This was only mild," Solidum said. A 2.9 magnitude earthquake occurred offshore 4 km northeast of Madre de Dios, Bantayan island in Cebu at around 10:47 a.m. Intensity 2 was felt in Bantayan Island.

"These are normal earthquakes that occur in the area because of the presence of faults," Solidum said.

An active fault, called the Philippine fault zone, runs from Luzon to Mindanao.



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Party-list solon slams GMA travel expenses

By Norman Bordadora

BAYAN MUNA REP TEODORO Casino yesterday criticized President Macapagal-Arroyo for spending hundreds of millions of pesos in taxpayers' money as shown in a news research report that said nearly a fifth of the Office of the President's expenditures—some P482 million—were used on travel expenses in 2006.

The report posted on gmanews.tv by GMA research was culled from the Commission on Audit's report on the OP.

"The Commission on Audit has some 'pieces of evidence' to show that the Office of the President is an extravagant spender on multiple travels of the President and we can easily surmise that the Palace indeed spent for the House junket contingent to Europe,"

Casino said in a statement.

The militant party-list lawmaker made the statement in the wake of the continued European tour of Ms Arroyo. The House of Representatives has also been under fire because of the participation in the trip of more than 30 lawmakers.

Casino cited the report as saying that nearly a fifth or 20 percent of Office of the President's expenditures were on "traveling expenses" in 2006 totaling P482 million—more than double the P210 million spent for the same expenditure item in 2005.

"President Arroyo visited 13 countries—including Finland, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Cuba and the United States—in 2006. For that year, the OP spent P398 million on foreign travels alone, its second-biggest single

expenditure," Casino said.

"In each of those trips, she had only a handful of legislators in tow," he added.

Casino said Ms Arroyo is a frequent traveler and is known to give travel perks to her "select favorites in Congress."

"A check on the current House junket contingent in Europe shows

that aside from the two known millionaire congresspersons, the 30 other House Members would certainly not spend their own money for the high-end trip," Casino said.

"Another possible source of evidence would be the statement of assets and liabilities of these legislators that will prove that they cannot possibly foot the bill," he added.

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Groups slam GMA human rights award

OUTRAGED HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS are planning to write Spain's Alcala de Henares University to recall the Medalla de Oro it handed to President Macapagal-Arroyo during her state visit there.

The Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (Pahra) and allied groups said the award constituted a "mockery" of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and "added insult to an injured nation."

The university awarded the medal to Ms Arroyo on Tuesday for championing human rights. University Rector Virgilio Zapatero praised her for abolishing the capital punishment and seeking help to put an end to the killings.

"We are thinking of drafting a letter to the university so that we'd be able to present the real score of human rights in the Philippines and for them to be educated that human rights is not just the death penalty law," Pahra secretary general Renato Mabunga said in an interview.

"The award should be recalled. That's one thing we will demand from the university," added lawyer Virgie Suarez-Pinlac, spokesperson of the Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya (Movement for National Democracy).

The university obviously wasn't aware of the human rights situation, and ought to be informed of the report by UN rapporteur Philip Alston, he said.

"That alone would give them the knowledge of the human rights situation here," he said. "That alone would give them second thoughts about giving an award like that."

TJ Burgonio

Ampatuans play Santa

By Tarra Quismundo

AIRPORT EMPLOYEES GOT A CHRISTMAS bonus of sorts yesterday when Maguindanao Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan Sr. and son Datu Zaldy Uy Ampatuan, governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, decided to play Santa Claus and give workers gifts of P1,000 each.

Ninoy Aquino International Airport workers made a dash to a queue when the Ampatuans, who were waiting for a flight at the VIP room of the departure area, started handing out cash at around 4 p.m.

The line extended from the special room near the immigration check counters, past the Duty-Free Shop, to the pre-boarding waiting area. By their own estimates, airport workers said some 300 of them received the unexpected bonus.

"The line was so long because they (airport workers) heard that somebody was giving cash. But I did not go because I cannot leave my post. I have to guard our products," said Arnold Esguerra, a security guard posted at the Duty-Free Shop.

The elder Ampatuan had come to the airport with his staff to send off his son, Datu Zaldy and other relatives who were to fly to Saudi Arabia on a Saudia Airlines flight. The group was bound for Mecca for the Hajj, a religious pilgrimage for Muslims.

Witnesses said members of the officials' staff handed out cash to the employees in P1,000- and P500-bills," he said.

Tribute to NIC

THE REMAINS OF UNIVERSITY of the Philippines professor Monica "Nic" Atienza will lie until today at the chapel of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines building on 879 Edsa near the corner of Times Street in Quezon City.

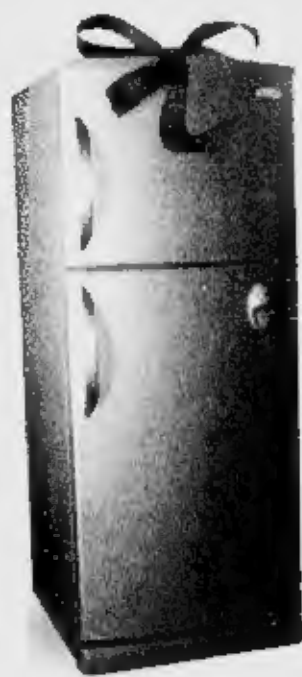
A program of final tributes will start at 10 a.m. today. Cremation is scheduled at 3 p.m. at the Chinese Cemetery in La Loma, Quezon City.

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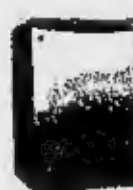
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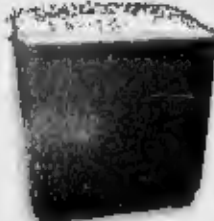
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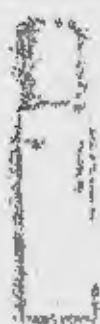
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Luminous Cross rising in small Quezon town

From page A1

handful of volunteers who believe they were called on this mission by God.

Waiting for another miracle
Devotees who visit the sanctuary go up 14 flights of stairs equivalent to the 14 stations of the cross. On each landing is an artwork done in mixed media (fiberglass, wood, metal, glass) depicting a station of the cross. So far, stations one to seven have been finished. Stations

eight to 14 await funding or perhaps, another miracle.

The prayer tower has a dome where sits a cross which is 7 meters high and 5 meters wide. It is the world's first luminous cross mounted with five images of Marian apparitions.

The elements on the luminous cross and the building of the sanctuary are collective inputs from the dreams and inspirations received by various Catholic devotees and priests, mostly Filipinos, including an Indian national.

For the past three years, P20 million has come in the form of donations, from the sale of rosaries, rosary bracelets, Marian portraits, Christmas decors, religious icons and medals. Text brigades, mailed solicitations, Internet-based promotions, even overseas visits have been employed by volunteers to continue work on the prayer tower.

Built with faith and love

"[Because] we started with nothing, probably only with ardent prayers, we see the sanctuary's construction as a miracle. Volunteers would be able to raise money, at least to pay the laborers, until money for fresh supplies and materials would come. Our Lord really provided," says Dr. Paz Carandang, one of the Servants of the Luminous Cross of Grace, the name the volunteers gave themselves for the task of building the sanctuary.

"The building of the Luminous Cross of Grace sanctuary is a dream come true. We were guided by the inspiration that God is on top of the project. It is

a work made possible only through faith and the community spirit of love," she says.

Carandang adds: "Now we are witness to signs that the sanctuary may indeed have a role in the conversion of souls, as Fr. Raul 'Puti' Enriquez declared before us years ago at the start of the project. Among ourselves, we have noted many changes taking place in the way we see our day-to-day lives, the way we tackle our personal problems and the way we have opened ourselves to be of help to others."

God's will

Carandang, a cardiologist with the Makati Medical Center, hails from Sariaya, Quezon. Three years ago, she was among those who responded to the call of Enriquez, parish priest of the St. Isidore Parish, to help build the prayer tower.

To many Servants of the Luminous Cross of Grace, the sanctuary now stands as a reminder of what faith can achieve and how the Lord's promises come to be realized in the hands and thoughts of people who leave everything to God's will.

It has become a symbol of the work ahead which is to reach out to souls who seek to return to the ways of the Lord. As a powerhouse of prayer, it echoes the call, many times delivered by the Blessed Mother in her apparitions, for conversion and spiritual renewal.

Seeking meaning to visions

Enriquez, who is known for his passionate advocacies within the Church, is a spokesperson for Gomburza, a cause-orientated organization of priests, nuns, brothers and laity committed to the struggle for justice.

He believes the mission for the building of a tower started when he perceived a call from God to obtain an image of Santissimo Cristo de Burgos from Spain in 1998.

Setting forth on a pilgrimage abundant with faith but with little money, Enriquez succeeded in bringing back a Santissimo Cristo de Burgos image which bears the 5,000 wounds Christ suffered in the Passion to complete the salvation of man. The image is a powerful symbol of God's immense love for mankind.

In August 2004, earnest efforts to build the sanctuary beside the St. Isidore Church finally started after a group of devotees, all of whom were not from Quezon Province, sought a meeting with Enriquez.

Pilgrimage tourism

One of them was Cynthia C. Lazo, a Department of Tourism director who has made pilgrimage tourism a personal mission. While in prayer, Lazo says she had a vision of gathering people on a trip to Agdangan to see Enriquez.

In their meeting with Enriquez, Lazo and her group shared with him their separate visions which turned out to have common elements—a place of prayer, a luminous cross, fishermen, and the image of the risen Christ.

In turn, the priest told them that he, himself, had recurring dreams of building a towering place of prayer.

The Sanctuary design

Construction started in November 2004 using design specifications from Enriquez who wanted the sanctuary to rise 120 feet (37 meters) from the ground to symbolize the 12 tribes of Israel.

The monstrosity design was provided by Aia Santos Halili, an artist from San Mateo, Rizal. According to Halili, the design came from a dream she had after accepting the assignment.

Halili initially thought her involvement with the Quezon project would end with the submission of her design to Enriquez.

However, she remained active with the construction, as did the other Servants, who started to discover their spiritual gifts, like healing and the ability to read mystical signs.

In March 2005, Halili was requested by an Indian devotee to render another version of a painting of the Luminous Cross of Grace with five images of Marian apparitions. The Indian devotee claimed that the Blessed Mother had prompted her to have the image done as a painting.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Halili became more active with the project as her gift for healing developed, as did the other Servants, including Halili's sister Nona Aquino.

Raising funds and seeking spiritual graces by way of Holy Mass and confession, the Servants of the Luminous Cross of Grace meet at 7 p.m. every Tuesday at the Janssen Hall at the Christ the King compound on E. Rodriguez Ave. in Quezon City.

In the last three years, people have visited Agdangan to see the prayer tower, and attend Holy Mass on special liturgical feasts at the St. Isidore Church.

They have been also asked to render moments of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Many have recounted experiences of coming out refreshed and energized by the Holy Spirit.

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General Lim: I was forced to join Trillanes walkout

From page A1

of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV in the hotel standoff, is currently detained with Trillanes and the rest of the Magdalo soldiers at the Camp Crame custodial center. State prosecutors had earlier said they would seek the group's transfer to the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City.

In an urgent motion filed before Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150, Lim said through his lawyer Vicente Verdadero that he was "not a Magdalo officer facing a coup d'etat charge and did not walk out from the sala of Judge [Oscar] Pimentel."

He attached a copy of Pimentel's order dated Nov. 29, which charged 14 of the accused with direct contempt for walking out of the proceedings.

'Incredulous'

That order said Lim, a witness in the coup d'etat trial and not one of the accused, was "forcibly dragged out of the courtroom" by Lt. James Layug before they marched with Trillanes and company out of the Makati City Hall on J.P. Rizal Street and onward to the Peninsula at the intersection of Ayala and Makati Avenues.

But according to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, what Lim did on Nov. 29 was "his call."

Ermita found incredulous Lim's statement that he had only been forced to join Trillanes and company in the walkout from the courtroom and eventual failed revolt at the Peninsula.

Higher rank

Ermita pointed out that Lim was a brigadier general, and thus ranked higher than Trillanes, a Navy lieutenant (senior grade) before becoming a senator.

"Kung ayaw niyang sumama, sana siya ay naupo doon at di siya sumama (If he did not want to go with them, he should just have stayed put and not joined them)," Ermita said.

Ermita, himself a retired general, made the remarks to reporters at the Palace in reply to a question on whether he thought Lim's statements showed that he was distancing himself from Trillanes.

Lim is facing charges of violations of Articles of War before the Armed Forces' special general court-martial over an alleged coup attempt in February 2006.

The court-martial conducts its trial at Camp Capinpin in Tanay every Friday of the month.

Lim said the military, through Col. Pedro Herrera-Davila, staff judge advocate of AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, had given its consent for the transfer to the state penitentiary in Muntinlupa of "only the Magdalo soldiers charged with coup d'etat

[who] walked out" of Pimentel's courtroom.

The AFP has begun an informal inquiry into whether Lim and 11 Magdalo rebel officers should be tried before a military tribunal for calling for the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo at the Peninsula.

Another court-martial?

Should the military bring Lim and the Magdalo officers to trial, it would be another court-martial for all of them for allegedly leading attempts to overthrow the government in February 2006 and July 2003, respectively.

"You can call it a case buildup. But there are procedures [followed in the military]... We can say that we are in the preparatory stage, gathering materials that would be reviewed," Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro told reporters.

Bacarro, the AFP spokesperson, said military lawyers had taken some videos of the siege at the Peninsula.

"This is, I think, the initial stages of the conduct of the investigation," he said.

He added that an official investigation would begin once the pretrial investigation officer had been designated.

Roll call

The 11 Magdalo officers still considered on active duty who walked out of their coup d'etat hearing in Judge Pimentel's courtroom and joined Trillanes and Lim at the Peninsula had been identified by police as Lieutenants Billy Pascua, Andy Toranzo, Eugene Gonzales and Jonnel Sangalang; Captains Gary Alejano and Segundino Orfiano Jr.; Lieutenants (senior grade) James Layug and Manuel Cabochan; Lt. (junior grade) Arturo Pascua Jr.; Ensign Armando Pontejos; and Capt. Nicanor Faeldon.

Bacarro said the "best option" for Faeldon and the two other Magdalo soldiers at large—former Sergeant Elmer Colon and Sonny Madarang—was to voluntarily surrender to authorities.

"I think our message to them would be they cannot hide forever. Eventually, the time will come when the long arm of the law will catch them," he said.

Captured Magdalo

Bacarro also said Marine Pfc. Arvin Celestino had been returned to the AFP for temporary custody pending the resolution of the Department of Justice on the complaint filed by the Philippine National Police against the Magdalo soldier.

"I am not at liberty to say where he is, but definitely he is under the custody of the [AFP]," Bacarro said.

Police said Celestino had admitted to being present at the Peninsula standoff on Nov. 29.

Celestino was arrested at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport last Dec. 5, as he was about to leave for the United States to work as a lifeguard. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

Gov't loses case vs Tan; SC voids sequestration

From page A1

asking the high court to reverse a 2006 Sandiganbayan decision ordering the government to lift the sequestration on the shares of stock in four companies owned by Tan—Allied Banking Corp., Foremost Farms, Fortune Tobacco Corp. and Shareholdings Inc.

The shares were sequestered in 1986 following the people power revolution that brought down the Marcos dictatorship. (See "What Went Before," Page A8.)

The case involves a 20-year-old suit, Civil Case No. 005, that the PCGG filed against Tan and the Marcoses, claiming that Tan's assets were part of the dictator's ill-gotten assets.

The government's case against Tan is based mainly on a cross-claim on the Tan companies by Imelda Marcos, the dictator's widow, who declared to the Sandiganbayan that her husband was the beneficial owner of most of the Tan companies.

In her court filing, Imelda revealed the details of an elaborate 60-40 wealth sharing scheme between Marcos and Tan. She said that 60 percent of the Tan holding company, Shareholdings Inc., was really owned by the Marcoses.

Tan, the country's third richest individual with a fortune of \$2.3 billion according to Forbes magazine, has repeatedly denied he was a crony of Marcos and that he acquired control of several firms at preferential prices.

The government is also still trying to recover P25.4 billion in allegedly unpaid taxes from him.

Not setback

The PCGG yesterday was undeterred by the Supreme Court decision, insisting that it was "not a setback" for the agency.

Jay Miguel, the PCGG's head of legal services, said the purpose of the sequestration, which was to prevent Tan from dissipating the assets of the companies suspected to be part of the ill-gotten wealth of Marcos, was still being achieved.

"There is still an ongoing case with the Sandiganbayan. The defendant couldn't dispose of



LUCIO TAN: The rich get richer. The low profile tycoon, who goes around Metro Manila by helicopter, is listed by Forbes as the country's third richest person.

anything anyway because these assets are deemed to be in custodia legis [in the custody or keeping of the law]," he said.

Miguel said the Supreme Court decision dealt only with the administrative aspect of the case.

"It didn't fully say whether the properties are ill-gotten [or not]. We're still in the process of presenting evidence, witnesses and documents with the Sandiganbayan," he said.

"This isn't over yet," he said in a telephone interview.

21 years ago

The 73-year-old Tan, who was born in China's Fujian province and moved to the Philippines as a child, keeps a low profile, shunning interviews and preferring to traverse Manila by helicopter.

"It can only be a positive

What Went Before

ON VARIOUS DATES IN 1986 and in January 1987, the newly formed Presidential Commission on Good Government, which is tasked to recover ill-gotten wealth accumulated by ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his associates, ordered the sequestration of shares of stock owned by Lucio Tan and other persons in different corporations.

The corporations involved were Maranao Hotels & Resort Corp., Allied Banking Corp., Foremost Farms Inc., Shareholdings Inc. and Fortune Tobacco Corp.

After the issuance of the first sequestration orders, Tan and the other shareholders, namely: Mariano Tanenglian, Carmen Khao Tan, Florencio Santos Sr., Natividad Santos and Florencio Santos Jr., filed petitions requesting the PCGG, then headed by Jovito Salonga, to lift the orders.

When the PCGG did not act on the motions, Tan and company asked the Supreme Court in August and September 1986 to nullify the orders for sequestration. The high court referred the petitions to the Sandigan-

bayan in February 1990.

In August 1993, Tan and the other shareholders filed with the Sandiganbayan a supplemental petition that invoked Section 26, Article 18 of the 1987 Constitution, which provides that a sequestration order shall be issued only upon showing of a prima facie case.

No prima facie evidence

In the same month, the Sandiganbayan nullified the orders of sequestration of shares in Maranao Hotels & Resort Corp. PCGG appealed the decision before the Supreme Court, but the high court affirmed the judgment in 1996.

In 2005, the Sandiganbayan ruled that the remaining writs of sequestration issued by the PCGG against Tan and company were void. The Sandiganbayan explained that before the PCGG issued the writs, it had failed to establish prima facie evidence that the properties were ill-gotten.

The PCGG then filed a petition assailing the Sandiganbayan decision before the Supreme Court. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

thing for all of us in the group," Cecilia Pesayco, group secretary for the Tan-owned Philippine National Bank, said of the Supreme Court ruling.

"It's 21 years already and it has really limited the bank and the group from expanding," Pesayco said.

In its Dec. 7 ruling, the Supreme Court said it was necessary that the sequestration orders be backed by "prima facie factual foundation," meaning it is accepted as correct until proven otherwise so that the parties claiming to own the assets can contest the sequestration's validity, including going to the courts.

It said this opportunity to contest would be meaningless unless there is a record which the reviewing authority can use as a basis for determining whether the sequestered property was ill-gotten or whether the PCGG had acted illegally.

No reason for TRO

It said such records, which should have included the reason the government wanted to seize the shares of stock and the record of proceedings that were the basis for the sequestration orders, were not present.

The high court also found no reason to grant the PCGG's plea for a temporary re-

straining order on the antigraft court's 2006 ruling.

It also rejected the PCGG's argument that the Sandiganbayan encroached on its jurisdiction, and that the antigraft court substituted its judgment for that of the PCGG.

It said that when sequestration orders are nullified for lack of showing that the assets are ill-gotten, the courts are not replacing the PCGG's judgment with their own but are just applying the law.

Marcos Jr. as witness

The assets being contested are a combined 60 percent of nine Tan companies—Fortune, Asia Brewery, Allied Banking, Foremost Farms, Himel Industries, Granspan Development Corp., Silangan Holdings, Dominion Realty and Construction Corp. and Shareholdings Inc.—which the PCGG wants forfeit-

ed in favor of the state.

Earlier this year, the Sandiganbayan summoned the dictator's son, Ilocos Norte Rep. Ferdinand Marcos Jr., to identify the deeds of assignment and corporate records to prove the beneficial interest of the Marcos family in the assets of Tan. With a report from Daxim Lucas

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A jab at Trillanes was dying ...

From page A1

bring home the point.

"Aakdain ka ang isang karanasang wala akong kaalam-alam, at marahil para ay hindi ko dapat pakialaman. Pero may ganon ba? Ang tao ay tao. Lahat ng may kaugnyayan sa tao, ay may kaugnyayan sa akin (I will write on an experience I know nothing about. Perhaps I shouldn't interfere. But is this possible? We are, after all, people. Everything that affects people affects me)," Villanueva wrote in his blog, renewillanueva.blogspot.com, the day after the ruckus at the Pen.

"Kaya sa kabila ng kung ilang araw na pagkakasangkutsa ko sa gamot, pavis, ubo ang paninikip ng hinga, sinikap kong bumangon para mag-blog. Nasabay pa ang hinagpis ng lamas sa adberturismo ni Senador Trillanes at garapal na pang-nagaw nila ng kapangyarihan. Gumimik na rin ng ganito ang bagitong poster boy ng Oposisyon sa Oakwood. (Bakit mahilig siya sa luxury hotel?) Siyempre, kinasuhan siya ng Gobyerno (Although I am very ill, I forced myself to get up and blog on Senator Trillanes' self-ish attempt to grab power. The poster boy of the opposition has done this before at Oakwood. Why does he like luxury hotels? Of course, he has been charged by the government)," he stressed.

Advice to other adventurers

He concluded his last written piece with an advice to those who would want to follow Trillanes' path: "Iisa ang gusto nating lahat. Ang alam ko, demokrasya, Paano matatamo? Kailangan ang rule of law. Dapat nating itaguyod ang batas sa lahat ng pagkakataon. Walang short cut dito. Hindi pwedeng mainip o mapikon dahil mabagal ang proseso (We all want the same thing. To my knowledge it's democracy. How do we attain this?



BATIBOT HEAD WRITER, Rene Villanueva, was elevated to the Palanca Awards Hall of Fame.

Through the rule of law. We must respect the law at all times. We should not be impatient or be annoyed because the process is slow."

Villanueva succumbed to a massive stroke on Dec. 5 at the Philippine Heart Center. He had suffered from past strokes and other illnesses including pneumonia and kidney failure due to complications from diabetes. He was 53.

His fiery tirade against Trillanes shows his utmost affection for the country and its people.

Close to the people

Villanueva's friend and colleague Marne Kilates wrote in his blog: "Rene was one whose discipline and persuasion in writing was to stay close to the people and the place he knew and loved (mainly the La Loma district in Quezon City), and to derive his writing from there, as well as dedicate his talent and knowledge to them."

"Up to the end, despite the sophistication and breadth of the imagination he had developed—in his teaching, mentoring in workshops, and his travels—he always wrote for and about them," he added.

Villanueva was the award-win-

ning playwright and author everyone looked up to. When he was only 29, he earned the distinction of winning the most number of Palanca Awards. Among his prize winners include "Kumbersasyon," "May Isang Sundalo," "Huling Gabi sa Maragondon," "Punla ng Dekada," "Ang Hepe," "Asawa" and "Awit ng Adarna."

He authored several children's books, including the popular "Aklat Adarna" series, "Si Emang Engkantada at ang Tatlong Haragan," "Barumbadong Bus," "Umuulan," "Ang Pamilya Ng Ismid," "Nagsasabi Si Patpat," "Si Elephas at Estrogon" and "Si Paula Oink Oink." He also produced the compilation "Sa Dako Roon," featuring Filipino translations of famous Brothers Grimm stories.

Batibot

His most prominent work was as head writer for the defunct children's program "Batibot," the Filipino Sesame Street, that earned him several international awards, including the Prix Jeunesse in Germany and the New York Film and TV Festivals. In addition, Villanueva was bestowed the Gawad CCP Para Sa Sining for Literature in 2004 and the Gawad Chanselor sa UP as the "Pinakamahusay na Alagad ng Sining."

Villanueva also etched his name in Philippine cinema for his screenplays of "Pasan Ko ang Daigdig" and "Gabi Na, Kumander."

At the time of his death, Villanueva was an assistant professor of the Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature at University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

Villanueva's wake is at the FTR Chapel of the Sanctuary along Araneta Avenue in Quezon City. His remains will be brought today to the Hardin ng mga Diwata in UP Diliman. Cremation rites will be announced later.

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Rape victim 'very upset' over Jalosjos' release plan

From page A1

denied former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos to two life terms in prison for rape.

The girl's anger was roused by reports quoting a prison chaplain as saying that Jalosjos could be eligible for release as early as Dec. 16 in the wake of President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision in April to commute his life sentence to 16 years.

News that Jalosjos may soon walk free had also outraged Bishop Pedro Arigo, head of the Episcopal Commission on Prison Pastoral Care (ECPPC) of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

Arigo said the government's grant of pardon to prisoners was now becoming "very political."

Legarda, in a telephone interview, conceded there was nothing she could do legally to prevent Jalosjos' release after Ms. Arroyo commuted his sentence.

Legarda said she did not know where the girl was now, adding: "I guess she's working."

A matter of outrage

She described the commutation of Jalosjos' sentence as an "act of grace" but one that should be a cause of anger for other prisoners who had not received presidential mercy.

"That's really the problem, that's why it should be a matter of outrage for people without the power of prisoners like Jalosjos. They'd be there forever," Legarda said.

She said it seemed such clemency was only for the rich and famous.

But she acknowledged it was the President's prerogative to grant executive clemency to convicts.

When to give up

"I wish there was something we can do. There's nothing we can do when the President acts," Legarda said.

"You know, there's something we Filipinos must learn and that is to realize when to give up. Like Trillanes. You can't keep beating your head against the wall. Unless the people rise up, the President is not going to be moved. Why would she be moved to overturn her own commutation?" she said.

Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV is facing a new charge of rebellion for his short-lived takeover of the Peninsula Manila hotel on Nov. 29.

Small consolation

It was a small consolation to Legarda that Jalosjos was not pardoned and that his civil rights have not been restored, meaning he could not vote and could not hold public office. He has also lost parental authority over his children and still has to pay the rape victim damages.

"I was expecting him to be pardoned. At least now, he's still a convict. For us and the public, he's still a rapist," she said.

She said the commutation had not taken away Jalosjos' rape conviction.

Major church donor

One thing to be done after his release is to watch if he would try to seek public office or be appointed to a government body.

"If he tries to run, we can file a complaint with the Comelec (Commission on Elections)," she said.

As for the statement of the prison chaplain, Msgr. Roberto Olague, that Jalosjos had shown remorse, Legarda pointed out that a priest testified in Jalosjos' behalf during the rape trial and that the former lawmaker is one of the biggest donors to the Catholic Church.

Only deserving ones

Bishop Arigo said that while the Church encourages pardon for offenders, this should be applied only to deserving inmates.

"We don't want to see them (inmates) inside the prison forever but such a privilege should be applied to all and the facet of restorative justice must not be set aside," said Arigo.

He said there were many other old inmates suffering inside the country's prison system, and that most of them could hardly walk and only spent their days in wheelchairs.

Arigo questioned why the government had failed to show clemency to other prisoners who might be more deserving of a pardon or a commutation of their sentences.

Review other cases

He urged the government to review the cases of other eligible inmates.

Jalosjos was among a list of people who

had received presidential clemency this year.

Last October, Ms. Arroyo pardoned former President Joseph Estrada after he was convicted of plunder by the antigrift court.

More deserving than Erap

Weeks later, she pardoned Pablo Martinez, one of the soldiers convicted of the 1983 murder of opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino.

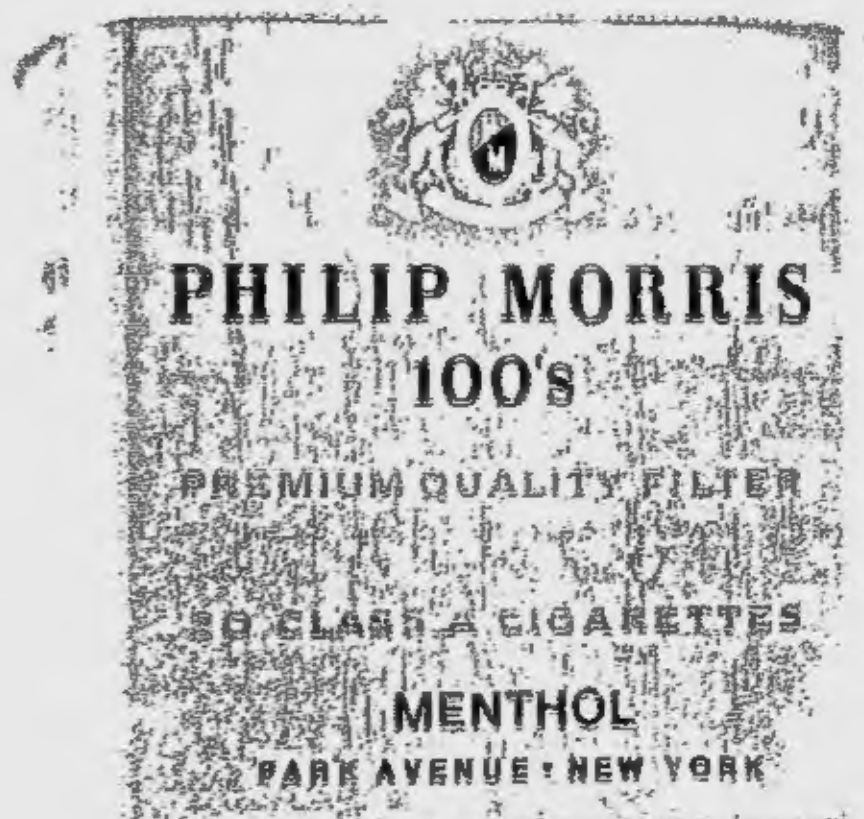
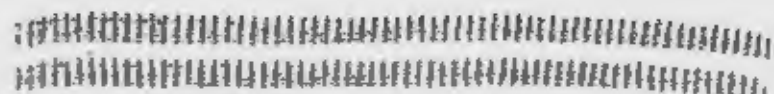
"Like Estrada and Martinez, the government should be fair and consistent in granting pardon," said Arigo, pointing out that

Estrada and Martinez were pardoned on humanitarian grounds since both had turned 70.

The ECPPC has said there are at least 122 convicts who have turned 70 but are still languishing behind bars.

ECPPC executive secretary Rodolfo Diamante said earlier that these other inmates were more eligible for pardon and had suffered more in prison compared to Estrada and Martinez.

Diamante said the grant of parole and pardon should not be based on age only but on the inmates' readiness to rejoin society.



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THE DISTINGUISHED Tony Blair, the UK's former prime minister, comes calling on President Arroyo at the presidential suite of the Dorchester Hotel in London. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

KEEPING IN TOUCH: President Arroyo listens from Seville, Spain, to the report of PNP Director General Avellano Razon during the videoconference of the National Security Cabinet Cluster meeting. Also in photo are DILG Secretary Ronaldo Puno (2nd from left) and PMS chief Secretary Cerge Remonde. LYN RILON



Court junks Atong trip to Cambodia

By Jocelyn R. Uy

SORRY, NO CAMBODIA TRIP FOR CHARLIE "Atong" Ang.

The Sandiganbayan Special Division has junked Ang's motion for reconsideration in which he asked the court for a weeklong travel pass to Cambodia, where a three-month-old lottery consultancy job is awaiting him.

Ang, a consultant of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. in the Estrada administration, received a job offer last August from 888 Corporation, a company that operates a lottery in Cambodia.

The company cited his expertise in the numbers game and contended that he could help the business earn more.

Two months ago, the Special Division turned down Ang's request to travel abroad, pointing out that he, a probationer, might abandon the jurisdiction of the court.

Ang appeared before the court and explained why he needed to go abroad.

He said there was a need for him to inspect the site and observe how the company was running its lottery game so he could come up with a design to perk up the business.

"The company has been running the lottery game for six months now and it is going bankrupt," Ang had told the justices.

But in a resolution issued late Thursday, the antigrift court ruled that Ang could still do his job as a consultant by using teleconference facilities and the Internet.

"In this modern age of information technology, actual presence is dispensed with by the use of teleconference facilities and Internet access. The purpose of meeting with the officers of the [company] can be achieved by teleconference," the court said.

Ang was placed under a two-year probation in May, two months after the court convicted him of indirect bribery.

Taking note of Ang's "history," the court ruled that he was still a flight risk.

GMA to Kuwait . . .

From page A1

sibility of the emir extending clemency to Ranario if Ms Arroyo interceded for her.

Only Ms Arroyo (and possibly Bunye) would seem to have an inkling of what lay ahead for Ranario.

State dinner with emir

Al Sabah will host a "state dinner" for Ms Arroyo, who will stay in Kuwait only for four hours. She is returning to Manila on Monday.

In Manila, Malacañang officials were keeping their fingers crossed.

"The President will go to Kuwait to talk to the emir of Kuwait on the case of Ranario," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

Ermita said that Ms Arroyo's trip to Kuwait was confined only late Thursday night.

Malacañang's prayer

"*Harinawa magkameron na magandang resulta ang pagbisita ni Pangulong Arroyo sa emir ng Kuwait* (Let's pray that President's visit with the emir of Kuwait would produce a good result)," Ermita said.

Ms Arroyo, her husband Jose Miguel Arroyo and their children—Evangeline and Representatives Diosdado and Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, with their wives—along with a large presidential party visited France, Spain and the United Kingdom in a span of eight days.

Ms Arroyo's official visit to the UK ended Thursday (early morning in Manila). She and her family returned to Spain via Seville.

With her decision to fly to Kuwait, Ms Arroyo and her family would have to skip a scheduled tour of churches and historical landmarks in the ancient cities of Cordoba and Granada, home to monuments, cathedrals, palaces and mosques. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

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OPINION

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Top of the (dung)heap

IT'S NO LONGER SURPRISING. THE PHILIPPINES has become such a regular fixture in the hall of shame of international corruption that it would be big news if it landed outside the disgraceful circle of the world's most corrupt countries. In the latest corruption survey of 60 countries by the Berlin-based Transparency International, the Philippines landed 10th among those countries where petty bribery was rampant.

EDITORIAL

The Global Corruption Survey 2007 of households on their experiences found 32 percent of the respondents saying they paid a bribe to obtain a service in the past year. That put the Philippines in the company of the world's worst offenders, topped by Cameroon, where 79 percent said they paid bribes, and Cambodia which had 72 percent of respondents saying the same thing.

An earlier survey on corruption also done by Transparency International, the results of which were released in September, placed the Philippines in the 131st slot among 180 countries, ranked from the cleanest to the dirtiest. It scored a sorry 2.5 on the corruption perception index (CPI), using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 indicated the highest level of corruption and 10 the lowest. Only Indonesia, among its neighbors, was a little bit worse, with a score of 2.3, even as Thailand got 3.3, Malaysia, 5.1 and Singapore, a very enviable 9.3.

Another survey, done in January-February this year among foreign businessmen by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, found the Philippines getting the worst rating among 13 countries in Southeast Asia, edging out Indonesia for that dubious distinction. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is the worst possible score (not 0 as in the Transparency International index), foreign businessmen based in the Philippines gave the country a rating of 9.4.

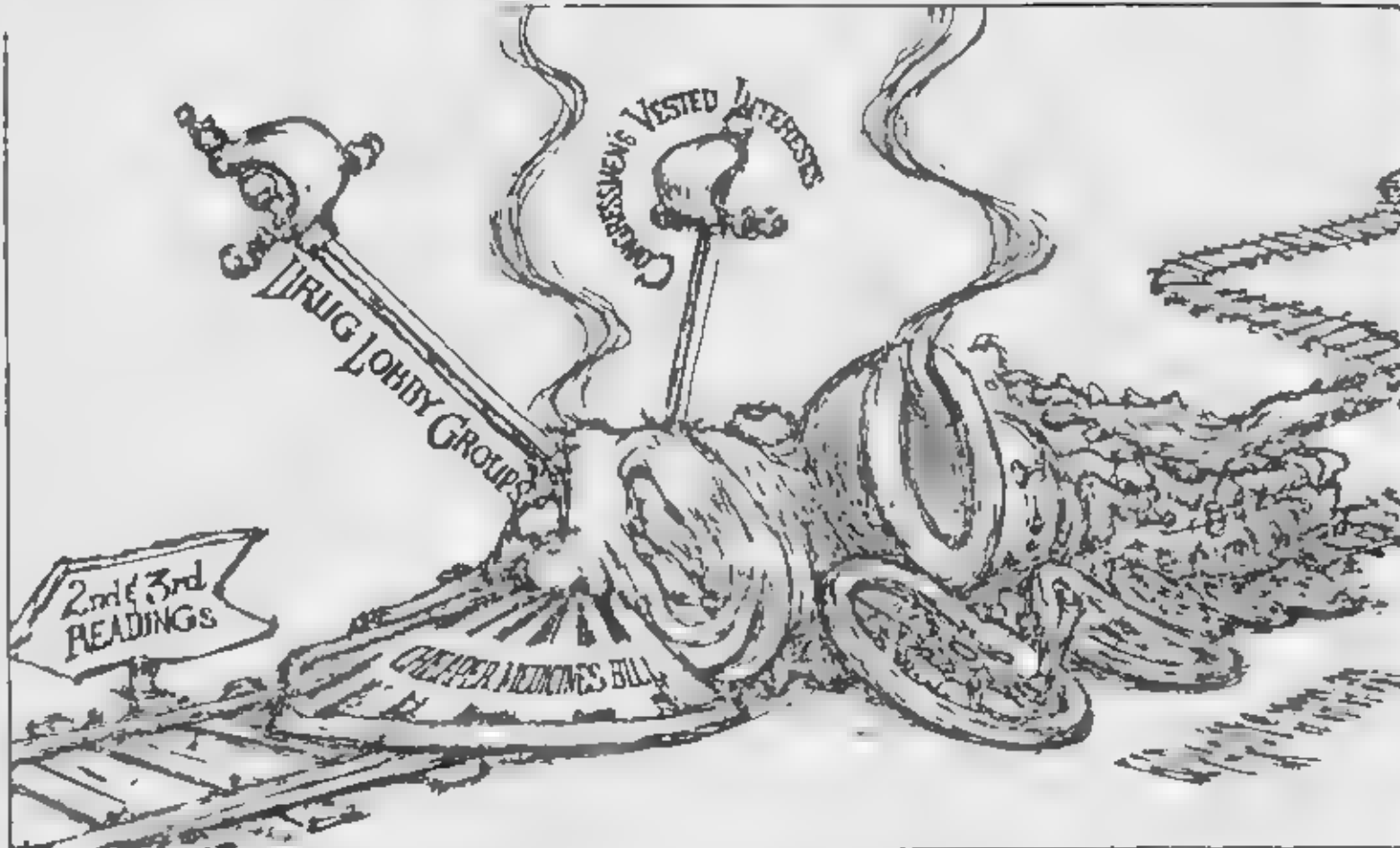
While it is bad enough that the Philippines is consistently ranked among the world's most corrupt countries, what makes the situation worse is that corruption is perceived to be getting worse. The PERC score of 9.4 for this year is sharply higher than the 7.8 the country got in 2006. In Transparency International's CPI, the country's score remained unchanged from that of 2006 at 2.5, but it slipped in the rankings from 121st place to 131st among the 180 countries surveyed. And in the survey on bribery, the percentage of households that paid bribes in 2007 was actually double that of the year before.

But in the eyes of Malacañang officials, such perceptions do not reflect reality. The chief of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, Constancia de Guzman, has been quoted as saying in reaction to the latest survey, "We will take it as a cue to look at our policy. But while bribery is a problem, it is declining because the people have more awareness of it."

There is no question about public awareness of the problem, for who hasn't heard of the many scandals involving corruption and bribery in high places—like the aborted ZTE-NBN contract, the NorthRail project and the distribution of cash to congressmen and governors right inside Malacañang, to mention some of the latest ones? But it's hard to imagine how anybody can say with a straight face that the problem is declining, given the growing number of corruption cases coming to light and the progressively larger amounts involved.

Such self-deception is alarming because it means that the end is nowhere in sight for such thieving and robbing, whether petty or grand. In fact, such an attitude would prove some 29 percent of Filipino survey respondents right—the ones who see corruption rising in the next three years.

Which is sad, because that would make the poor victims many times over. As Transparency International noted, the poor are more likely to fall prey to such predatory practices since individuals with higher incomes are likely to resist such bribe demands. "Too often, poor people must part with their hard-earned money to pay for services that should be free," said its chair, Huguette Labelle. Another official pointed out that because the police and the judiciary in many countries are "part of the cycle of corruption ... corruption is interfering with the basic right of equal treatment before the law."



The quest for the new

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David



as in our expectations of how we should conduct ourselves as a nation

We realize that we can no longer follow those thoughtless ways we associate with the negative side of our culture without exposing ourselves to the dangers of societal dissolution and chaos. This lies at the core of our political crisis. In the beginning, the quest for reform takes the form of a call for a return to basic values. Thus we desperately scan the horizon for trustworthy individuals who embody them. Then we realize that these values themselves have become so general and so far removed from concrete situations that, even as they retain their rhetorical function, they provide little useful guidance on how to solve the moral puzzles of everyday life.

This is where we are today. We find ourselves grappling with the enormous complexity not only of the world but of ourselves as a society. The old practical rationalities and moral maxims embedded in our culture no longer work for us. Every attempt we make to patch up a little hole in one institution only seems to produce larger holes in another. We are torn between the call for moral revolution and the call for social revolution, and yet, strangely, whether we opt for one or the other, we fall back on the search for trustworthy leaders.

The sociologist Niklas Luhmann's warning should speak to us: "Systems are rational to the extent that they can encompass and reduce complexity, and this they can only do if they possess understanding of how to make use of trust and distrust without placing too heavy demands on the person who finally shows trust

or distrust: the individual." On this, I am quite certain that we have spent more time looking for individuals who deserve our trust than in nurturing rational systems we can trust.

This quest for bigger-than-life exemplars imbued with ethical purity is not very different from the search for messiahs. As a singular solution to the complex problems of a modernizing society, it will fail because it unrealistically puts the entire burden on the personal steadfastness and all-encompassing wisdom of leaders.

This is not to say that rational systems have no use for trustworthy individuals. In periods of transition, when so much public cynicism needs to be dispelled, institutions can be enormously strengthened by the recruitment of credible persons into their fold. But, the rationalization of institutions can only be meaningfully achieved at the operational level. This is not done overnight. It is accomplished in everyday practice, by the slow inculcation of a new ethos of equality, and through the power of persistent example.

Unfortunately, the impulses of the old order are still actively at work in every sphere of our national community. They trade on the quick and the familiar, undermining long-term programs of reform. This is what heightens public despair, and paves the way for dangerous attempts at final all-or-nothing solutions.

But I remain hopeful. I like to believe that the modern way of thinking is already upon us. We see it in the demand for transparency and accountability in public service, in the insistent call to preserve the autonomy of the legal system and the civil service. We see it too in the public yearning to de-politicize the police and the Armed Forces. But above all, we see it in the many urgent efforts of civic groups and movements to override the existing culture of patronage by restoring self-respect and self-reliance among the poorest of our people.

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

Injustice in snail-paced CARP implementation

IT BEARS REPEATING THAT ALMOST 20 years after the government undertook its constitutionally mandated (Article XIII) agrarian reform program, only 18 percent of the privately owned land targeted for compulsory acquisition and redistribution is actually in the hands of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs). At this rate, it will take another 80 years to complete the program.

This snail's pace is exemplified by the experience of the Sumilao farmers, who are in our midst after a two-month, 1,600-kilometer march. Their story also provides us with very important insights into the abuse of power.

The Notice of Coverage for the compulsory acquisition of the 144 hectares of land that the farmers are claiming, was served on the private landowner, NSQRMDC (hereinafter referred to as Q, for Quisumbing) 18 years ago.

The payment for the property, valued at P2.4 million, was deposited into a trust account 16 years ago at the Land Bank for Q's account.

The certificate of land ownership (CLOA) was issued to the farmers (137 of them at the time) 12 years ago by the Department of Agrarian Reform. Yet, as of this writing, none of them own the land. Worse, the land is now owned by San Miguel Foods Inc., which bought it five years ago from Q. The farmers, or more accurately 59 of the original 137, are still landless, and have been joined by another 40 landless farmers in seeking title to the land. The other 78 of the original 137 now own some 66 hectares of land (less than one hectare each) which they acquired some four years ago from landowners who voluntarily offered the land.

Who kept them from their land? Obviously, Q. And it certainly looks like he had the active cooperation of municipal and provincial officials. But even that would not have stopped the transfer from going through, because the DAR (under then Secretary Ernesto Garilao) would not be dissuaded from its mission. What stopped the DAR and the farmers in their tracks was the Office of the President (through

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod



Executive Secretary Ruben Torres), and the death blow to their dreams was delivered by none other than the Supreme Court. And if one is permitted an analogy, they were not even allowed to rest in peace—grave robbers and mutilators got into the picture.

Briefly, here is what happened: Plan I seemed to be to claim exemption from CARP coverage because the land was being leased. It failed, because DAR merely suspended coverage until the lease was up. Plan II was to convert the land from agriculture to industrial/institutional, with the enthusiastic cooperation of the municipal and provincial government which seem to have been dazzled by Q's conversion plan that included everything but the kitchen sink (Development Academy, agro-industrial park, forest development, mini-zoo, hotel, restaurants, housing project). The DAR turned the conversion application down for a very simple reason: the law absolutely prohibited (non-negotiable provision) irrigated land from being converted from agricultural use. The property, aside from being prime agricultural property, was irrigated.

The DAR then awards the CLOA to the farmers.

Plan III kicks in. Q goes to the Court of Appeals, and Bukidnon Gov. Carlos Fortich protests to President Fidel Ramos. Enter Executive Secretary Ruben Torres, who reverses the DAR, and allows the conversion plan, turning down the DAR's two motions for reconsideration. The Court of Appeals becomes moot.

The farmers, their backs to the wall, take advantage of an expired TRO against them, enter

the property on the basis of their CLOA. Violence ensues: their houses are burned, their carabao are let loose and farm implements are confiscated. Farmers then go on a 28-day hunger strike, which draws national and international attention, particularly because it is close to election season.

FVR steps in with a "win-win" solution that gives farmers 100 hectares, the other 44 hectares to Q to pursue his conversion plans.

Q balks. Goes to Supreme Court for relief. The Court initially dismisses the petition on a technicality, then changes its mind. It not only decides that the win-win solution is null and void (leaving the Torres decision in play), but that the farmers are not a "party in interest" because they are only "recommended farmer beneficiaries" (utterly ignoring the CLOA issued to them).

The Court then dismisses the motions for reconsideration of the DAR on a technicality, i.e., filed six days past the deadline (but this time, does not change its mind).

Thus, nine years after Q gets the Notice of Coverage, he wins. He can keep his land and pursue his conversion plan. Farmers have zilch.

Here's the kicker: Q does not do anything toward conversion (at least as far as DAR inspection shows). What he does is sell the land to SMFI in 2002 (within the five-year period) allegedly for a very pretty penny, the transaction allegedly facilitated by Bukidnon Gov. Jose Zubiri (this is the grave-robbing analogy).

But the law on conversion is clear: If the conversion is not accomplished within five years, the land reverts back to agriculture. And any changes in the plan must be first approved by the DAR. Which is why the farmers are marching: to get back that land.

But there seems to be a PR campaign going on, with the SMFI cast in the role of an innocent buyer in good faith (with all its lawyers?) and the farmers—agrarian reform—as bad guys. Agrarian reform doesn't work, and those farmers are neither landless nor are they Higaonon.

All bes. Social injustice

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Agrarian reform through peaceful means

EVERYONE KNOWS THE SAYING THAT ABSOLUTE corruption results from absolute power. In the agrarian setting, the absolutely powerful are those landlords who exploit their economic power to bully rural people into placing them in political office as well, and who do not hesitate to use the police or the military, if not their own private armies, to enforce their will.

The farmers who walked 1,600 kilometers from Sumilao, Bulidnon to Manila in the last two months were blocked by force from the lands to which they were issued Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) in 1995, under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. I have seen videos of the black-bonneted private guards surrounding the property. A number of farmers died in pursuing their claim. And so the story of Cablesang Tales in "El Filibusterismo" resonates to this very day.

As long as such absolute and oppressive power still exists in the countryside, and thus continues to stoke the fires of revolutionary hatred, agrarian reform is incomplete. It is fortunate indeed that some farmers who have been denied justice for so long are still trying to use peaceful means in their cause, not all are as patient.

Since genuine agrarian reform radically changes the balance of power, it needs compulsion to be carried out. Such compulsion can be very violent, as in Russia and China, it can also be relatively bloodless, as in postwar Japan and Taiwan, both militarily controlled at the time. It is not essential to a genuine reform that landlords be divested of economic wealth, since they can be financially compensated. They should use the compensation to transfer their economic base to urban areas, drawing a lesson from the friar lands purchase during the American occupation.

The friar lands purchase. The Treaty of Paris of December 1898 stipulated, among other things, that the United States would respect the property rights of Spaniards in the Philippines. At that time, many friar estates had already been occupied by Filipino revolutionary forces. The way

SOCIAL CLIMATE



Mahar Mangabas

the United States respected the friars' property rights was by paying the friars for their lands.

Immediately after the Philippine-American war (1899-1902), the US colonial government purchased the major part—some 159,000 hectares—of the friar lands. It did not try to eject the *revolucionarios* by force, lest the war be rekindled.

For political considerations, the United States agreed to purchase prices which were considered higher than the market value of the land. In his history of the Church in the Philippines, the Dominican priest Fr. Pablo Fernandez even boasted that it was his order that haggled the longest over the land price, and that Governor General Robert Taft gave in because he was in a hurry to finish the matter.

In effect, the United States solved the friar lands problem by spending the money of American taxpayers instead of the lives of American soldiers. The friars remained wealthy in financial terms—for instance, I suppose they invested in San Miguel Brewery, where religious orders held board seats as late as the 1950s—but their political power in the rural areas was eliminated.

The American purchase of the friar lands mollified the Filipino revolutionary leaders, whose prime demands had included the restitution of the friar lands "to the people." These leaders had intended to divide up the lands among the fighters in proportion to their respective contributions to the revolution.

Actually, most of those who eventually acquired the friar lands were not the tillers themselves but some revolutionary leaders, *unquilinos* (middlemen who formerly collected the rents and administered

the lands in behalf of the friars), and American agribusinesses, especially those interested in sugar.

In particular, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo obtained a lease on 1,050 hectares of an Imus, Cavite estate on which he had not been an occupant, for a rental of 20 cents per hectare per year, which was lower than what others had paid on the same estate. That sounds like a behest-lease.

In addition, many Spanish *hacenderos* whose lands had been seized by the *revolucionarios* sold their holdings to the *principalistas* during the early years of the American occupation because they had no means to reoccupy the lands, and were uncertain about their prospects under the new colonial regime.

By one historian's assessment, the inequality in agrarian-based wealth and power was neither increased nor decreased by the American regime. By 1910, there were still about 40,000 tenants on the former friar estates, of which 45 percent had been acquired by only 82 buyers and 492 lessees. The holders of agrarian power merely changed from predominantly Spanish to predominantly Filipino plus some American.

The old *revolucionarios* were bought off, but the maintenance of intense inequity in access to agricultural land in the 20th century allowed their places to be taken by new revolutionaries. The complete removal of the extreme inequities is a compelling necessity. The crucial question is whether it can happen through peaceful means.

See my "Distributive Justice in the Philippines: Ideology, Policy and Surveillance," in "Reflections in Development in Southeast Asia" (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1988), and sources cited therein, particularly Jose N. Endriga's "The Friar Lands Settlement: Promise and Performance" (Philippine Journal of Public Administration, 1970).

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Bursting my bubble

I AM A DOCTOR. IT WAS A CHILDHOOD FANTASY TURNED into reality. I had my first doctor play set at 4 years of age. From then on, I knew that I wanted to be a doctor. Every hospital visit further strengthened my resolve to be one. I admired the doctors in their immaculate white coats, with stethoscopes dangling from their shoulders. I feared their presence but was inwardly grateful for it. I hated their power over me yet I felt secure because of it.

An aunt tried to persuade me to take up nursing. She offered to pay for my tuition fee and all other school expenses, if I would choose the career she had picked for me. She discouraged me from going into medical school. I told her I had a high respect for nurses, but that was not my calling. I wanted to be a physician, and that was what I was going to be.

When I went to medical school, I learned that my chosen profession required a lot of sacrifices. We spent sleepless nights reading our books, drank pots of coffee, and dozed off in the library. We took one exam after another, dissected cadavers, and incessantly peered through microscopes. As our high school friends became engineers and scientists, we were still struggling through the difficulties of medical school. While they were already enjoying their first paycheck, we had to live with our meager allowance.

On the first day of medical clerkship, adrenaline was rushing as we had our first "code blue." We had to restrain ourselves to keep from panicking and did whatever we could to be of help. Alas, we lost our first patient. There were more code blues and in time, we learned to serve with grace under pressure.

It was an emotional roller coaster-ride for all of us. With the loss of every patient came pain. With every patient restored to health came bliss. As the days passed by, there was more excitement, depression, high spirits and dejection. In time, we learned how to deal with our emotions: to force a smile even if we are feeling down, to feign confidence in spite of uncertainty, and to be strong for our patients. Every heartfelt "thank you" we receive from our patients, every smile of gratitude, every life saved, made our exhaustion disappear and our profession worthwhile. Truly, I find fulfillment in this noble profession.

So like everyone else, I was appalled when "Desperate Housewives" insulted those who "graduated from some medical school in the Philippines." We do not deserve this slur. It burst my bubble and crushed my pride. I think of all the sleepless nights I have spent, of the Christmas and other holidays I could not spend with my family because I had to stay at the hospital, of the countless times I felt exhausted while attending to patients, of my parents who are scrounging every centavo to get me through medical school, and I ask myself if all these were in vain. For somebody who has yet to start her medical career, that insult was intolerable.

Now with head held high, I encourage my colleagues to prove those behind that episode wrong. I ask our senior colleagues to guide us so that we will be as competent and skilled as they are now. I have chosen this profession and I stand by it. I have graduated from a medical school in the Philippines and I am proud of it.

To our professors who do not get tired educating and training us, we thank you for sharing your experience and passion. We will strive to be the best in our chosen profession.

Florence Binua, 25, is a medical intern at the University of Santo Tomas Hospital.

Why please others?

Genesis Dolde

WHY DO WE NEED TO PLEASE PEOPLE? IT'S GOOD TO check your every move, every word and every breath to see if it is proper. But to do things to please other people makes as much sense as speaking in sign language over the phone. Everyone as they have his own set of standards which may seem achievable but impossible to meet. They are waiting for any sign of a mistake that they can use against you and to ruin everything you've worked hard to build. Even those who don't know you that well are quick to judge and criticize.

I suppose it is human nature to be unsatisfied, to search for mistakes, to notice people's blunders. Maybe they do this to feel superior and right, or to simply ridicule others for the fun of it. They have a crab mentality that makes them pull down others who are doing well.

It's hard enough to please your peers, but doing the same to those who are older and who presume to know better since they've "been there and done that" requires even more work. It saddens me to realize that the individuals we, the generation of DOTA (Defense of the Ancients) and other PC games, and cell phones, look up to are sometimes the ones who disappoint us. They claim that with their knowledge and experience, they are better than us. But they are no better than little brats who whine non-stop when they do not get what they want or simply gossip.

Sometimes you can't help but wish they would just shut up. If they must talk, can't they say nice things about other people and take note of their good deeds and achievements? Do they feel good ganging up on somebody else? Doesn't constructive criticism sound better than back-stabbing?

I am reminded of a strategy used in "Defense of the Ancients" which can be applied in other games. You set up an attack behind the prey so you have the element of surprise. With its defenses down and with very little time to react, it is unable to retaliate and therefore easier to bring down. Better yet, you find an ally and "gang-bang" the target, making it feel outnumbered, helpless and hopeless.

Life is a constant challenge, an everyday battle for survival. So what do you do? You fight. You stand up. You rise to the occasion and prove all of them wrong. Instead of whining, show everyone how good you are. And if all else fails, leave everything to God. Pray for it, and pray for them. They may not listen to you, but the Father up there surely will.

So don't live life trying to please others. Keep doing good and please the One who really counts. Please Him and leave to Him everything, including your hurts and your pains. As the saying goes: "Do your best, and God will do the rest."

Genesis Dolde, 21, is a BS Materials Engineering graduate of the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

Education as a community affair

THE CRISP AND COOL DECEMBER AIR contrasted sharply with the warm spirit emanating from St. Mary's University in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, last Dec. 3. The warmth came from the zeal and enthusiasm of community leaders supporting the campaign to improve public education in their municipality. It was the launching of Jollibee Foods Corporation's "Busog Lusog Talino" (BLT) project, an in-school feeding program for more than 200 Grade 1 and 2 students of seven elementary schools in Bayombong. The project is part of the 57-75 Movement, a campaign to reverse the education crisis, in partnership with the local Department of Education, the local government of Bayombong, St. Mary's University and Jollibee Solano.

Bayombong is a second-class municipality in Nueva Vizcaya. It is the center of major government and educational institutions and is bustling with service industries that support mostly government employees and students. Bayombong relies primarily on income from being a government and academic center.

Bayombong's most important asset is its human resource so it came as a shock to Mayor John Severino Bagasao to learn that the average achievement scores of their elementary pupils for school year 2006-2007 is only 53 percent, below the already dismal national average of 59 percent.

"The poor academic performance of soon-to-be employees and students of higher education greatly undermines the future and potentials of our municipality that relies heavily on the capacity of its human resources. It is imperative to immediately address this concern; otherwise, Bayombong might literally be left behind," noted Mayor Bagasao. So he immediately signed up as one of the 57-75 Movement's pilot sites.

Bayombong is quite familiar with participatory governance. Since 2006, the Jollibee Foundation and AIM-Mirant Center for Societal Divides have been training community leaders from both Bayombong and Santa Fe on the social

COMMENTARY

Philip Francisco Dy

technology of Bridging Leadership

The Citizen-Responsive Governance project brought local stakeholders together in a dialogue process, resulting in a shared Municipal Development Agenda that now serves as the centerpiece program in Mayor Bagasao's second term. Addressing the education crisis is one of the major elements of this agenda. A Multi-Sector Committee on Education was also formed to lead the efforts to realize the Education Agenda. Members of this Committee—the Municipal Planning and Development Office, Saint Mary's University, DepEd supervisors of Bayombong's districts—also comprise 57-75 Task Force-Bayombong.

The Committee immediately identified the seven lowest performing elementary schools in the municipality that would receive assistance for the first year under the 57-75 Movement. Priority was given to the in-school feeding project to improve attendance of students and reduce the dropout rate. While the schools are already implementing feeding projects from the meager income of canteen earnings, the feeding activity was mostly sporadic and done as part of the already heavy workload of the "nutrition coordinators."

As part of the national Task Force 57-75, Jollibee Foundation provided technical assistance to the seven schools to improve their capacity to scale-up the feeding program. Based on its own experience in implementing the BLT project in Manuel L. Quezon Elementary School in Jondo and on that of Kabisig Kalahi Foundation (an NGO focusing on community-based feeding program), Jollibee Foundation incorporated parent involvement in managing the feeding project. Planning the lunch menu and supervising the cooking are done by the

school's nutrition coordinator; marketing, cooking and actual feeding are done by the parents. This eases the burden on the educators and teaches parents how to cook and serve nutritious but affordable meals. Jollibee Foods Corporation funded the daily feeding at P10 per child and also sponsored a seminar for parents on the proper feeding of students by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute. The Kalinga Mission Center, the community extension arm of St. Mary's University, will continue to hold monthly seminars on Nutrition, Health and Parenting, with volunteer faculty and students as lecturers.

Mayor Bagasao meanwhile committed the support of the chairmen of the barangays where the seven schools are located. They will set up suitable cooking areas in each school and supplement with other food items the daily allocation per student. The rural health units will conduct monthly weighing of students covered by the feeding program. The Diocese of Bayombong will teach parents to produce fuel-efficient and environment-friendly clay stoves called *sikalan*.

Jollibee's BLT project aims to address hunger and improve the health condition of the students so they can attend and actively participate in class.

By involving the parents themselves, Jollibee BLT hopes that proper feeding practices will start at home. Mayor Bagasao, on the other hand, is determined to show that with community involvement, every student can learn well in Bayombong.

On that cool December morning, it was heartwarming to see a local education alliance beginning to happen. Through the opening prayer, the stakeholders vowed to "[serve] God and one another so that, together, we reach out to bring back the warmth of humanity."

Philip Francisco Dy is the training manager of the AIM-Mirant Center for Bridging Societal Divides and has been assisting Bayombong in the Citizen Responsive Governance Project.

Unthinking AFP officials, unusually efficient solons

UNCLASSIFIABLE. A DOCUMENT PURPORTEDLY coming from the military pictured the Philippines as a country on the verge of a political upheaval. According to this document, President Macapagal-Arroyo is the target for ouster by a well-organized, well-funded, well-orchestrated coalition which includes her key allies, opposition leaders, the Church, business, media, civil society, professionals, academe and ideological groups such as the Social Democrats and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army.

The document even linked a foreign group to this supposedly grand oust-GMA movement said to be bigger than the oust-Marcos drive in 1986.

But a close examination of this classified document shows an ill-researched report based on media stories, unverified rumors, Internet postings and supposedly eyewitness accounts of various opposition gatherings which were open to the public.

Some data were either outright fabrications or sheer disinformation. An example is the College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP), said to be a "left organization" whose "writers" were being "recruited" by the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

The fact is: the PDI does not "recruit" but accepts qualified applicants who pass a battery of tests and interviews. CEGP membership is not among the criteria.

Thinking military officials should be able to see beyond the "information" peddled in such reports. The question is: are they still thinking?

F Zamora

CRACKING THE WHIP. As chairman of the powerful finance committee that oversees the government's budget, 83-year-old Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile made sure the Senate kept to its schedule on the national budget debates.

On Nov. 27, the second day of the debates, Enrile arrived half an hour ahead of the 10 a.m. start of the day-long session. By 10:30 a.m., however, the session had not yet started, with Sen. Loren Legarda, the first in the line-up of senators who wanted to debate, saying she had to "review [her] notes" first.

Sen. Edgardo Angara volunteered to start the ball rolling, but before deliberations finally got underway Enrile said a mouthful about

BETWEEN DEADLINES



how "people are treating [the budget] in a cavalier way."

After that outburst, the following sessions always started on time, even when deliberations the previous day lasted well up to the night.

Not even the Nov. 27 earthquake shook Enrile's concentration. When Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV pulled off his Peninsula Manila caper on Nov. 29, Sen. Francis Escudero joked on the sidelines that perhaps the Senate should postpone the budget debates so the senators could monitor the "exciting" events. But a serious Enrile went on with the deliberations without any reference to the Makati incident.

Later in the afternoon, Legarda suggested on the floor that the Senate should be commended for doing its work despite the turbulence.

Enrile also had help from sub-committee chairmen Senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Angara and Joker Arroyo in defending the budget. But when Santiago left to join the President's Europe trip, Enrile took over defending the budgets of the departments she handled.

The other senators also did their share, having been forewarned to prepare ahead if they wanted to debate the budget allocation of agencies they were interested in.

"It is very embarrassing for a senator to ask for information during a debate. You are supposed to be armed with the information if you are going to debate an issue," Enrile said.

Even Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr., who does not join plenary deliberations, participated in the debates—once, when the budget of the Department of Public Works and Highways was taken up. (On Dec. 4, the day of his "word war" with Optical Media Board chairman Edu Man-

zano, Revilla did not use the opportunity to question the agency's budget.)

Only Sen. Lito Lapid was not heard from during the budget debates. **D. Pansibugan**

HISTORY LESSON. It's not always easy to go up against your boss—or even a former boss.

This was what Assistant Solicitor General Amparo Tang must have felt when she found herself on the opposite side of a case from former Solicitor General Francisco Chavez.

"I wish I was arguing with him and not against him," Tang said when it was her turn to speak during the Dec. 5 preliminary hearing at the Court of Appeals on the habeas corpus petition of Maj. Jason Aquino, one of the soldiers detained in connection with the failed February 2006 mutiny.

But despite the awkwardness of the situation, she said it was her duty to represent the military officials who had been named respondents in Aquino's petition questioning the legality of his detention.

"Duty states that I have to argue against my former solicitor general," she said.

L. Salaverria

BLAST FROM THE PAST. From the Dec. 21, 1990 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer:

House Minority Floorleader Salvador Escudero III made it a point not to invite any of his colleagues to his birthday bash Tuesday night at the Escuderos' Kitanlad St., Quezon City residence.

"Bakit pa? Para ako lang ang bida, di ba?" (What for? I should be the star tonight, isn't it?), he told House reporters.

In the same party, the Sorogon solon surprised his well-wishers with a "double proclamation": "I have some good news for all of you. The first one just happened several minutes ago. The other has yet to happen. OK, the good news is Purefoods won over Alaska in tonight's PBA match. The other good news is—Cory has resigned."

While attending to his guests, Escudero held on to a half-empty bottle of Beer (na Beer). Later, he confided to House reporters, "props lang ito."

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OPINION

Crucial '2-year boundary' at hand

THE TAKEOVER OF THE PENINSULA Manila Hotel by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and their band of rebel soldiers and civilian supporters is but one of the many failed moves to oust Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo from power. It was a quixotic effort, to say the least, which failed to get public support even though the majority of the Filipino people are fed up with the abuses, rampant corruption and brazen disregard for propriety and civility in governance, which they believe the Arroyo administration is guilty of.

While we approve of the goal Trillanes and company wanted to achieve, we do not believe that the method they used was right. The senator might have gained prominence (or notoriety) because of what he did but he is not a step closer to the desired objective.

The live CNN coverage I saw on TV showed me part of what Trillanes is. He

cannot answer media questions coherently and he does not look like a charismatic speaker to me. I will not fault him at once as he was surely under great stress then, understandably.

No such actions are likely to succeed in our country as long as the military and the police are under the command of people like AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon who has been linked to Ms Arroyo's alleged acts of cheating and corruption, as well as to what many people perceive as her design to plunder and rob the Filipino people of their freedom of choice and of their nation's wealth. Esperon and GMA's partnership is a symbiotic relationship. She with her grip on equally greedy politicians and he with his finger on the trigger.

We saw how a military vehicle rammed the doors of the Peninsula and how ready those soldiers were to kill their brothers-in-arms on the other side of the

fence. Even Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro was in disagreement with the degree of brutal force the soldiers were willing to employ. It was an overkill.

The imposition of curfew from 12 midnight to 5 a.m. was also a knee-jerk reaction. The arrest of journalists covering the incident was uncalled for. They were just doing their job.

The 2010 presidential elections is fast approaching and that year is nearing the "two-year boundary." In 1973, a presidential election was supposed to be held. In 1971, or two years before the scheduled election, Marcos declared martial law, cancelled the elections and ruled the nation with an iron fist until 1986 when he was finally deposed.

Are we seeing a repetition of history? Haven't they ever learned?

God help this poor country.

—RAMON MAYUGA,
GerMayuga@aol.com

LETTERS

'Not the worst 2-term president'

I READ JOHN NERY'S NOV. 6 COLUMN in which he described "the younger George Bush," as "the worst two-term president in US history." I beg to differ.

Did Nery take into consideration Bill Clinton, who almost turned the White House into a warehouse for two terms?

Dwight Eisenhower? He did absolutely nothing. Harry Truman? He dropped the atomic bomb and stopped World War II, but did nothing else.

Nery might think I'm a "Bush fan." But he would be wrong to think so.

Bush and other politicians have made me uncomfortable. I'm an independent voter. I vote for the man and not for the party.

Bush is certainly not my ideal, but I would vote for him again, because after 9/11 he didn't just talk about action, he took action, and the world is safer now because of him. I also like him because he says what he means, and means what he says, plus the fact that, unlike the President of Philippines, he is not a thief.

Still, Ronald Reagan was my favorite. He was a strong man and a leader. To be sure, the United States propped up Ferdinand Marcos, until the Reagan administration got tired of him. Just like the US government now propping up Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. I wonder how long this will last. Until Washington, D.C. finally gets tired of her bribery, election fraud, corruption, human rights violations? US officials won't let her go on forever if enough Filipinos here start making a big noise.

I did enjoy Nery's column, and wish to see more in the same vein. My wife is a Filipino—which is why we are really upset with the Philippines' corrupt government.

—STAN KING,
stan_pi@yahoo.com

Learning from people who are taking a stand

OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION GOES out to all the INQUIRER staff members who rushed to the aid of Conde, the horse who was worked so hard that he dropped in the street. (INQUIRER, 11/18/07)

While it's heartbreaking to think that the only kind words or gentle hand he ever knew came at the very end of his life, at least he was given the painless peace he deserved. If the newspaper staff had not intervened, it was possible that Conde's owner would have tried to force this sick, crippled, starving horse to haul one last load.

Let Conde stand for all the animals who are used and battered until they have nothing left to give. Let us all learn a lesson from those people who took a stand instead of standing by.

Rest in peace, Conde.

—ROCHELLE REGODON,
campaigns manager,
People for the Ethical Treatment
of Animals Asia-Pacific (Peta),
RochelleR@PETAAsiaPacific.com

'Illusion of innocence'

PERMIT ME TO REFUTE MATTERS STATED in Robert Sison's letter. (INQUIRER, 11/27/07) Sison is bold in assertions, wrong in facts and fractured in reasoning.

1. Sison claims his client, Imelda Marcos, never deliberately delayed her cases. Wrong. Ms Marcos has criminal cases in Manila, Quezon City and the Sandiganbayan. Sison should not lump them together and claim that from their inception up to the present, the prosecution has presented and still presenting me as a witness. I have not testified in the other cases of Ms Marcos. I have testified 35 times (not 33) on direct examination at the Sandiganbayan in cases involving about 10 Swiss foundations. These cases did not move for about four years because of an inhibition issue involving a Sandiganbayan justice elevated to the Supreme Court. Ms Marcos' 32 criminal cases in Manila were delayed because she kept on elevating issues to the Supreme Court. Somehow, she was able to wangle the dismissal of some of these cases. But eventually, the Supreme Court itself ordered the reinstatement of the dismissed cases.

2. I never assisted the Presidential Commission on Good Government in negotiating with any Marcos lawyer or Marcos family member. As a principle of law and personal policy, there should be no compromise with thieves. This was why I caused the annulment of the PCGG-Marcos agreement in December 1998 (Chavez vs PCGG, 299 SCRA 744).

3. Sison cannot blame the duration of time before a case is finally resolved by the Supreme Court, for this is the very same flaw in the judicial system that Ms Marcos herself has availed of and benefited from.

4. I am the prosecution witness (referred to by Sison) who went up to the Court of Appeals and obtained a TRO and, eventually, a preliminary injunction because the trial court judge, after aborting the presentation of prosecution evidence, was set to acquit Ms Marcos. What the Court of Appeals enjoined was not the criminal prosecution of Ms Marcos but the promulgation of judgment set by the trial court. No decisional law has been violated by the Court of Appeals. Sison went up to the Supreme Court but his plea for a TRO was not granted because the petition is riddled with substantive and procedural infirmities.

5. Sison may brag about Ms Marcos' acquittal in other cases but I must mention that, in those cases, I was never presented by the prosecution as witness. All told, I have been summoned to testify for the prosecution only before the Sandiganbayan and the RTC-Manila, but not before other courts which went along with her illusion of innocence.

—FRANK CHAVEZ,
citizen, 117 Gamboa St.,
Legaspi Village, Makati City

Pathetic loser

I HOPE THIS NEW REBELLION CASE AGAINST Antonio Trillanes IV will lock him up for good. Enough for this "KSP" (*kulang sa pansin* or attention-starved) wacko.

Those who voted for him kicked themselves when he made that irresponsible and unsubstantiated accusations on the Glorietta explosion. His political stock practically went down to the septic tank after that.

So, what the hell is he thinking? That there are still a lot of people who believe in him? Probably by now, he has already realized that he is a pathetic loser.

—JOHN DEE, jon_dee01@yahoo.com

Rejection is best safety net against Jpepa

CONTRARY TO THEIR EARLIER CLAIMS, government negotiators are now finally admitting that the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa) will have adverse effects on our people, hence the need for "safety nets." But no amount of safety nets will be enough precisely because Japan's intention is to create conditions for the maximum exploitation of the Philippines' natural and human resources.

The country's experience with the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 1995 clearly shows that the so-called safety nets are only token mechanisms that have completely failed to stop the disastrous effects of free trade. We reiterate: the best safety net against Jpepa is its complete rejection.

The Supreme Court did find the WTO agreement constitutional, but the subsequent trade liberalization has had disastrous effects on the Philippine economy, severely damaging local agriculture and forcing millions of Filipinos to go abroad to seek work. The Supreme Court has a reason to revisit its arguments in *Tañada et al. vs. Angara et al.*

The main beneficiaries of trade liberal-

ization are First World corporations; their share of manufacturing sales has grown from 56 percent in 1999 to 75 percent in 2004.

The negative effects of trade liberalization are reflected in the refusal of underdeveloped countries to accept the deeper liberalization being pushed by First World countries through WTO. For this reason, the United States, Japan and the European Union nations are seeking further liberalization through bilateral free trade agreements such as the Jpepa. These countries are also using such agreements to force countries to accept liberalization issues, such as investment, government procurement and competition policy, which have been rejected at WTO negotiations.

If the government is prepared to truly develop the domestic economy and does not want to surrender it to foreign traders and investors, then safety nets are not needed. If it is not, then no safety net will be good enough.

—ARNOLD PADILLA,
spokesperson,
No Deal! Movement Against
Unequal Economic Agreements

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DOLE sa 74:

Serbisyong Laan sa Mamamayan, Laan sa Bayan!

Since its beginnings in 1933, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has been extending services and implementing programs with the well-being of the Filipino workers at the top of its agenda. As it celebrates its 74th anniversary this year, the DOLE renews its commitment to assist workers and employers in providing jobs and qualified skills, settling disputes and improving harmony, productivity, health and safety at the workplace. Among its numerous programs are training and equipping workers with relevant quality skills and knowledge, ensuring fair and just working conditions, and providing welfare assistance and benefits to all Filipino workers, here and abroad.

At 74, the Department of Labor and Employment remains as one of the most relevant and economically significant institutions in the country,

Serving:

- 36.1 million workers in the local economy
- Employers in around 782,980 establishments nationwide
- 4.6 million overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in more than 190 host countries; and

Networking on a Three Plus (3+) basis with:

- Its direct Social Partners, i.e. management and labor and
- Other stakeholders like the LGUs, the academe, non-government organizations, civil society, and other partners



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Messages

Warmest felicitations to the officials and employees of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as you celebrate your 74th founding anniversary on December 8, 2007.

Through the years, the DOLE has been an effective and dependable institution looking after the well-being of our workers, both here and abroad. It has pursued policies and programs with determination to ensure that the significant concerns of various stakeholders in the labor and employment sector, including our social partners, are properly addressed.

The DOLE's anniversary theme for this year, "Serbisyong Laan sa Mamamayan, Laan sa Bayan," underscores the government's overall commitment to the public, particularly the Filipino worker. Likewise, it reflects the DOLE's success in implementing government programs and projects aimed at sustaining a productive Filipino workforce, generating a peaceful labor front, and maintaining a culture of safe and healthy workplace.

Today DOLE has evolved into a more responsive institution covering a broader sphere of clients, which include the informal sector workers, families of overseas Filipino workers, and other vulnerable sectors of the society. Indeed, under the able hands of Secretary Arturo D. Brion, the DOLE has reached milestones that it can always be proud of.

I wish all the men and women of DOLE a meaningful celebration, and may you continue to be dedicated public servants.

Mabuhay kayo!



Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

I extend my warmest greetings to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as it celebrates its 74th founding year on December 8, 2007.

I congratulate the respected men and women of the DOLE for your utmost commitment in bringing about an unprecedented era of industrial peace and harmony between labor and management. Indeed, this momentous achievement has contributed immensely to our present economic progress that us likewise unparalleled for quite a long time.

Your theme "DOLE sa 74: Serbisyong Laan sa Mamamayan, Laan sa Bayan!" echoes your dedication to raise the bar of excellence in the government service to new heights. I hope that this event will inspire our fellow civil servants to rise above mediocrity and face the wide-ranging challenges of public service with dignity and integrity.

I exhort you to remain steadfast in your keenness to develop a culture of professionalism in the service, as it will indeed hasten our pursuit of achieving sustainable development for our country.

MABUHAY!



Noli 'Kabayan' de Castro
NOLI 'KABAYAN' DE CASTRO
Vice President
Republic of the Philippines

On this special day for the DOLE, let me proudly express my unabashed feelings for the Department and its people. I am very fortunate to have served the DOLE and to have known the brand of service, the joy in serving, and the camaraderie its officials and employees are noted for. I salute you all, officials and employees alike, past and present, for your significant role in building this nation.

For the past 74 years, the Department has been an ever-present and reliable institution looking after the well-being of our workers and of their employers. From very humble beginnings, it has grown from an agency with purely local concerns, to one whose responsibilities span the globe, 190 countries at last count. Its local concerns have grown from the formally employed workers to the informal sector of the workforce — the self-employed and the vulnerable ones such as our women, the youth, the disabled, and our indigenous people earning their living in their ancestral lands. From the professionals working overseas about four decades ago, the Department has thereafter managed the contract migration of workers of all kinds of skills and professions, land-based and sea-based, looking at all phases of overseas work from pre-deployment to their reintegration to Philippine society after toiling overseas.

All these achievements the Department accomplished through the men and women who unselfishly served and gave their all to carry out the Department's mandates — the preservation of industrial peace and harmony; the care for the workingman's workplace welfare; and the growth of employment by linking the employers and their job vacancies with the jobseekers who will man the production lines and deliver services. They did all these, doing their best and without counting the costs, even under adverse circumstances.

Maraming salamat sa inyong serbisyo sa mamamayan at sa bayan!



Arturo D. Brion
ARTURO D. BRION
Secretary
Department of Labor and Employment



INQUIRER *Visayas*

Mining stirs hornets' nest in Samar

By Vicente S. Labro
Tacloban City

TO MINE OR NOT TO MINE HAS remained an unresolved issue in Samar.

But the Mines and Geosciences Bureau is optimistic that the conflict between the provincial board and the mining company exploring for minerals in Samar will soon be settled.

Officials of Pacific Alumina Mining (Philippines) Corp. (PAMC), which is exploring the country's biggest reserve of bauxite (aluminum ore) in the province, have asked the board in a series of communications for the lifting of a work stoppage order it imposed on the firm about three months ago.

The board, however, has begged for more time, saying it was still consulting with stakeholders.

Samar is known to have an estimated value of \$21 billion in bauxite deposits. A large portion of the reserve area, however, is within the 333,300-hectare Samar Island Natural Park, a protected area.

Bauxite is the main source of aluminum, which is being used in packaging, transportation and building.

In a phone interview at his office in Catbalogan City on Tuesday, Vice Gov. Jesus Redaja confirmed the PAMC appeal, saying it had already suffered financial losses and schedule delay.

PAMC has also reminded the Sangguniang Panlalawigan that actual mining would provide more job opportunities and income from taxes, aside from the construction of mining roads and the establishment of an agro-forestry.

15,000-ton sample

The vice governor explained that the officials could not easily allow the mineral exploration to continue because of many environmental issues to be discussed first with concerned residents.

The board, he said, only learned of the project when it was informed of the presence in a Catbalogan village of a huge stockpile of earth dug by the mining company from different sites in at least three towns.

Redaja said he later learned from the engineers of PAMC, who were invited to the regular SP session on Sept. 14 to shed light on their operation, that the volume of earth



THIS old photo shows the area in Manicani Island that was mined of nickel ore by HMC.

FILE PHOTO

samples was already about 5,000 tons and that a total of 15,000 tons must be sent to China for laboratory testing to determine the bauxite deposits in the areas.

Also called to explain were representatives of the MGB and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Samar.

PAMC was required to submit all pertinent documents about the exploration. The mining company and the MGB later complied with the request.

Redaja said the officials wanted all aspects of the mining operation transparent and "in black and white," meaning they should be furnished copies of the mining development plan and other papers.

Board Member Jimmy Dy said he was against mining because it might lead to environmental degradation that would cause floods and landslides as what occurred in the past.

More importantly, a mining ban exists in Samar, Dy stressed. Ordinance No. 541, which was approved by the provincial board in October 2003, imposes a 50-year moratorium on large-scale mining in Samar.

In its Sept. 10 session, the board passed a resolution directing PAMC "to immediately

stop all ongoing exploration work program and mining activities" in the towns of Motong, Jiabong and Paranas, all in Samar, "until all to be submitted pertinent documents relative thereto are found in order."

The SP members believed that irregularities were committed "in the compliance of mining permit requirements." They also questioned the huge volume of earth samples taken.

MGB regional director Loreto Alburo said he was hopeful that the documents had "enlightened" the SP members on the legality and procedures of undertaking mineral exploration.

Green light

In an earlier interview, Alburo said the huge volume of samples taken from the field was not unusual. "This is actually the request of the (Chinese) plant, and our central office endorsed this request to us for approval," he said.

"This relates to technical feasibility study in the plant site. It's more on the metallurgical side," he added.

If a sizable mineral deposit was discovered, this would lead to a declaration of a mining feasibility. But the firm would have to first obtain an environmental compliance

certificate and other permits and documents.

"When the feasibility study is approved, that's the time they (miners) will have the green light to start (actual mining operations)," he added.

Loreto also explained that PAMC was authorized to explore by Alumina Mining Philippines Inc. and Bauxite Resources Inc., which were awarded the mineral production sharing agreements (MPSAs) by the DENR.

"They have an operating agreement. This is allowed under the law," he said.

The DENR approved the MPSA for Alumina Mining Philippines Inc. on Dec. 5, 2002, with a contract area of 6,694 ha in Motong, San Jose de Buan, and Paranas.

It also approved on the same date the MPSA of Bauxite Resources Inc., covering 5,519 ha in Gandara, San Jorge and San Jose de Buan towns, also in Samar.

The issuance of the agreements, however, has stirred a controversy as local environmentalists, Church, academe, professional groups and other concerned Samareños strongly oppose mining and logging in the province.

They fear that these activities would result to irreparable environmental degradation.

Bells you hope not to ring

By Vicente S. Labro
Maasin City

THIS KIND OF BELL IS WHAT PEOPLE would hope not to be ringing even on Christmas Day.

But if ever it would be rung, people would still be very thankful that it did sound the alarm of an impending danger and had saved lives especially in disaster-prone areas like Southern Leyte.

Recognizing the importance of community disaster preparedness efforts, leading wireless Smart Communications Inc. has recently donated as part of the company's corporate social responsibility some 100 "batingaws" or traditional bells to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Ready Project in disaster-stricken Southern Leyte.

The four-year Ready Project includes, among others, the identification of disaster-prone areas through the production of multi-hazard maps and the installation of community-based early warning systems.

The UNDP-funded project aims to address the problem of disaster risk management especially in vulnerable towns and cities in the country.

"It's been said that the Philippines is a world leader in natural disasters. We have typhoons, floods, earthquakes, landslides and tsunamis. For that reason, we must strive to be world leaders in disaster preparedness," said Jane Paredes, Smart public affairs manager for Visayas-Mindanao.

But why would a high-tech wireless company donate an old-fashioned warning device?

"We at Smart take a very pragmatic attitude towards technology. For us, it does not really matter all that much if an equipment is fancy or sophisticated. What's really important is whether it works. Does it do the job?" explained Paredes during the recent turnover of the 100 "batingaws" to the Ready Project in Maasin City.

In the past, people particularly in rural areas depended mainly on the fast beating of bam-

boos or iron rods and the continuous ringing of church bells to warn them of looming disasters like tornadoes, tsunamis, fire and earthquakes.

"In disaster preparedness," Paredes said, "we realize that we must utilize all possible tools. We have very sophisticated technologies like satellite phones, cellular phones and wireless broadband, and indeed, Smart has deployed such technologies in response to such emergencies as the terrible tragedy that hit St. Bernard."

Paredes herself was in St. Bernard shortly after a big chunk of a mountain slid and covered with mud and debris the entire village of Gunsaugon on Feb. 17, 2006 that killed more than a thousand people.

Smart provided people with communication facilities for survivors and relatives of the missing to contact relatives who were then outside of Southern Leyte, to inform them of the situation.

Many villagers died in the landslides in Gunsaugon and in other villages in Leyte and Samar in 2006, probably because there was no early warning device to forewarn the people of an impending disaster.

Nor were the residents of barangay Pinutan in San Ricardo, Southern Leyte and nearby Liloan and Pintuyan towns forewarned that landslides and flashfloods were to occur on that fateful day of December 2003. More than 70 died in Pinutan alone when tragedy struck.

Lack of early warning device could also be the reason about 5,000 had died when the killer flashflood hit Ormoc City in November 1991.

The batingaws donated to the province were rung when residents joined the simultaneous nationwide earthquake drill on Oct. 18 and the tsunami drill last month, spearheaded by the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) and other concerned agencies.

Smart has also donated 80 bells in the towns of Real, Infanta and General Nakar in Quezon, 20 bells in Sorsogon and another 100 bells in Surigao provinces as part of an NDCC project.



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Quarry fund take speeds past P100M

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE ADMINISTRATION of Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio was close to hitting on Wednesday the P106-million that the government-owned Natural Resources Development Corp. had collected from fees and taxes imposed on Mt. Pinatubo's sand in 2001.

Collections from June 29 to Dec. 5 this year reached P105.678 million, a report from the provincial treasurer's office showed.

The amount was generated from the P150-administrative fee and P150-tax on every truckload of sand.

At least P53 million would be shared by the province, seven towns and about 15 villages on a 30-30-40 percent basis, respectively.

The collection's balance would be spent on regulatory activities.

Purchases

The P13-million quarry income put in the provincial government's general fund was used to buy medicines, school desks and chairs and to repair hospital facilities, provincial officials said.

Based on daily receipts paid by quarry operators at the provincial treasurer's office, the collections fluctuated from a minimum of P500 000 on some days and a maximum of P2 million near week-ends.

Daily collections averaged P1 million.

Since June 29, receipts are valid for only three days to prevent their recycling.

The NRDC collection of P106 million from out of the P300-tax on every truckload of sand in

2001 was the lowest in the three years that it took over the supervision of the quarry industry since 1999.

Corruption

Former President Joseph Estrada ordered the takeover on the heels of alleged corruption when Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid was governor of Pampanga.

The highest amount that the NRDC drew was P154 million in 1999.

The agency gave a share of only P80 per truckload to the province and sand-rich towns and villages, which local officials protested then.

Earlier, the Panlilio administration also surpassed what Lapid and his son, Mark, collected from January 2004 to June 2007 in their stints as governor.

"We intend to stay the course of efficient collection but the new system stands to affect that," Panlilio told the INQUIRER, referring to Ordinance No. 176, which he vetoed but which the provincial board overrode.

Approved by the provincial board on the proposal of the Pampanga Mayors League, the ordinance changed in many ways the manner by which the capitol runs the quarry industry.

Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon



RELIABLE HELP

A farmer in Barangay Libod in Camalig, Albay plows the field with the help of his reliable help, a carabao.

7 Sayyaf men to be moved to Manila jail

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—REGIONAL Trial Court Judge Chito Meregillano granted Thursday a motion filed by provincial prosecutors seeking the transfer to Manila of seven Abu Sayyaf suspects currently detained at the Palawan provincial jail.

The provincial government had petitioned the court for the transfer of the detainees, citing potential security threats that may arise from their continued presence in the province.

The suspects, who were arrested in a series of military op-

erations in southern Palawan last September, have been charged with murdering a former companion, also a member of the Abu Sayyaf.

The suspects have been identified as: Abu Daizer, alias Daizer Yusof; Jemar Alfa, alias Abu Jas-

far/Jemaar; Moadz Jala, alias Abu Moadz Abdulla Abdullah, alias Abdullah; Omar Ibnu Jakaram alias Abu Mogera, and Najer Daud, alias Ben Salf Daud, and Yusop Hapipudin alias Abu Isam. **Redempto Anda, Inquirer Southern Luzon**

Zambales gov cries foul at Korean shipyard's no-VIP security rules

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Zambales Gov. Amor Deloso on Friday decried what he called "rude" treatment he received from officials of Korean shipbuilder Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction Co. Ltd. a few hours before Vice President Noli de Castro led the inauguration rite of the firm's shipyard in Subic town on Dec. 5.

"They were very disrespectful toward me considering I was the governor of the province hosting their project. *Diskumpyado pa sila sa kin* (They disrespected me). It was demeaning," Deloso told the INQUIRER by phone.

He was referring to the 10 a.m. incident where according to him, he was required to enter the main gate, join the long queue of visitors and pass the X-ray screen before he finally got a visitor's pass.

"I have no problem undergoing those if I went uninvited or I did a surprise visit but I was invited three weeks ago and I was excited to come. An invitation given in advance meant that you were expected so you don't necessarily have to go through all that process anymore," he said.

"Instead of pinning a tie on me, they gave me a visitor's pass," he raved.

All Philippine dignitaries, including De Castro, were required to go through the same process, he said.

"I was the only one who complained because I think, as public officials and being guests of a foreign investor doing business in the Philippines, we should all be accorded respect," Deloso, a lawyer, said.

"Indirectly, these Koreans are saying they are superior to us when they are on our land," he added.

Jong Pyeong Yu, HHIC-Philippines general manager, considered the incident "my personal fault."

"It happened because of the hectic schedule of our event and certain kind of miscommunication and misunderstanding. It is

true that we were not able to assign respective Koreans for all those VIPs (because they were many and they arrived in several batches)," Yu said in a text message on Friday.

"I was supposed to be at the main gate when [Deloso] came but unfortunately [I] was escorting [Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority] personnel to the heapad where [De Castro] was about to land so only safety officers were at the main gate," he said.

Yu said Deloso had not been singled out. The company had put in place a standard protection and security protocol.

Yu said he was meeting Deloso to "express my sincere apology." **Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon**



2 HOSPITALS

Patients cram the outpatient section (above) of the Bukidnon Provincial Annex Hospital in Marikina. Bukidnon Gov. Jose Ma. Zubiri said patients in an earlier photo were not unattended but were being kept for failure to pay their bills. The sick of Bukidnon, however, could look forward to better health services in the P36-million new hospital (right) in Marikina town that opened last Nov. 16.



Envoy backs farmers vs WTO pacts

BAGUIO CITY—SAYING THAT the World Trade Organization (WTO) has never been an equal playing field, the Cuban ambassador to the Philippines has urged Filipino farmers to oppose free trade pacts on agriculture.

Ambassador Jorge Rey Jimenez said that because of these pacts with the WTO, farmers in developing countries have been dislocated.

He was guest in a forum on "Learning from Cuba and Venezuela Social Systems and Alternative Strategies under WTO" at the University of the Philippines Baguio on Thursday.

"We think that the WTO is a

good place for negotiation, but we have to keep our position and dislocate the rounds of negotiations," Jimenez said.

He said Cuba supports calls for economic independence specifically on agriculture.

"We used to be the first exporter of sugarcane in the world. We realized that is not the way to develop our country. We are converting our economy from agriculture to services," he said.

"We support these kinds of approach from different countries because we once suffered from this kind of economic suicide."

"For example, in the case of sugar, you have to make a big in-

vestment to make a big production, and when you go to the world market, the prices become lower and you end up losing."

Dr. Darby Santiago, treasurer of Amstarad (Philippines-Cuba Friendship Association), said the agriculture sector can learn from the example of Cuba, which has deviated from the global trade led by First World countries.

"Cuba is not in the WTO and yet it can survive and its economy is so much better than ours. We want farmers to know the importance of their work. As farmers in nation building, they are the backbone of the econo-

my and their work is treated with dignity. They are the ones who are keeping this country afloat," he said.

He added: "It's proven already that we suffered the ill effects because of the importation of vegetables from other countries such as China and Taiwan. Our farmers are losing a lot."

Winde. Bolinger, secretary general of Cordillera Peoples Alliance, earlier said agriculture would always remain a contentious issue in the WTO as long as local farmers are shortchanged in the global trade. **Desiree Calusa, Inquirer Northern Luzon**



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SY 2007-2008 will be on Jan 26 to Feb 9, 2008

Cops block Palace march; farmers weep

From page A1

In Quezon City, where they set up camp and a picket on Thursday night.

"We are pained that we have finally reached Manila, and yet cannot enter Malacañang. We don't know when our claim will be resolved. Is this the way it should be—that Filipino farmers can only get to the Palace gates?" a farmer said through a megaphone.

Linda Ligmon, 55, said she and the other farmers were engaged in a peaceful march to seek the help of President Macapagal-Arroyo and did not intend to hold a protest rally. She said they were saddened to be told by police that Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita or any other Palace official would not receive them.

Before the farmers set off for Malacañang, Ermita reiterated the Palace's position that it would await the DAR's recommendation on the disputed 144-hectare property.

Told that Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman had earlier told the farmers that his office needed time to study their claim, Ermita said the Palace would take action only after the DAR had submitted its recommendation.

Immediate action ordered

Later in the day, Ms Arroyo ordered Pangandaman to "resolve the problem immediately."

She issued the order at a Cabinet national security cluster meeting at the Makati Shangri-la hotel, which she convened via video conference from Sevilla, Spain, where she is now on a private visit.

"The President instructed me to resolve the problem immediately and to assist the farmers," Pangandaman told reporters after the video conference.

He said he would decide on the case after Monday, the deadline he had set for the farmers and San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI), the owner of the disputed property, to submit their position papers.

On Thursday night, Pangandaman's announcement to the farmers that he was giving the contending parties until Monday to submit their position papers was met with a collective groan.

"We received the case from Malacañang only last Nov. 22. There is due process that we have to follow, but I assure you, we will resolve the case at the soonest possible time," he told the farmers.

He also assured them of free electricity, water and toilet facilities during their picket.

But Napoleon Merida Jr., chair of the San Vicente Landless Farmers Association, said, "The position paper is unnecessary. Isn't the case very clear already? Our land titles were cancelled because Malacañang approved the land conversion petition of [former landowner Norberto] Quisumbing in 1996," he said. (See timeline on Page 18.)

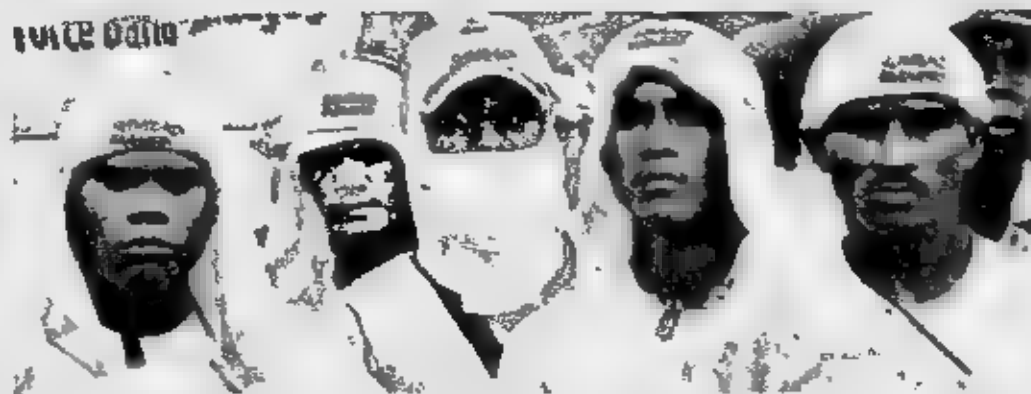
The 30-minute dialogue between Pangandaman and the farmers was mediated by Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros, Akbayan chair emerita Etta Rosales and Lupa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles, who had earlier celebrated Mass for the farmers.

During the Mass, Arguelles reiterated the Church's call for the government to award the disputed property to the claimants.

Cardinal's letter

The farmers had planned to personally hand to the President a letter from Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales expressing support for their claim to the land. But because Ms Arroyo was still in Europe, they decided to seek a meeting with Ermita.

Lawyer Marlon Manuel pointed that both the Senate and the House of Representatives had received the farmers and listened to what they had to say.



SO CLOSE AND YET SO FAR: They traveled all the way from Sumilao, Bukidnon to Manila to personally plead their case at the seat of power. They could only see the Palace from a distance as police stopped them in their tracks on Friday. Eventually, they were allowed to get close to the gates. But that was all.



IT WAS A FEELING: Nagtahan Bridge by security forces, the Sumilao farmers are angry, also hungry from all that walking. The Palace gate was shut but Executive Secretary Ermita provided them with food packs. **REM ZAPORA**



SUDDENLY, DAR Secretary Nasser Pangandaman (center) shows up at the farmers' camp site outside the DAR office in the Elliptical Road, Quezon City, Thursday night. Sumilao farmers Elgin Bajekjek and Linda Ligmon engage him in a heated discussion.

"We're waiting to be allowed to get near the Malacañang gate," Manuel said shortly before noon. "It's painful for the farmers to be stopped this way, with only a few hundred meters to go. We can't understand why we can't even get near the Palace."

Nearly an hour later, Rev. Fr. Anton Pascual, Caritas Manila executive director, arrived to relay the Church's support for the farmers.

Pascual said Cardinal Rosales had issued instructions that spiritual and other support be extended to the farmers to help them get to Malacañang.

"Cardinal Rosales is monitoring this [struggle], because of what use is the government if it cannot give importance to small members of society like these farmers?" Pascual said.

"The Sumilao farmers' welfare should be the government's priority," he said.

Food packs

The group planned to go to Caritas Manila on United Nations Avenue for lunch, but food packs arrived at around 1 p.m.—courtesy of Ermita, according to Sr. Supt. Cipriano Querol, the Manila Police District's deputy director for operations.

The farmers initially offered the food to the policemen blocking their way, but the latter politely declined to accept it.

At 1.25 p.m., the blocking force walked away toward Malacañang—a signal that the farmers had been allowed to proceed.

The farmers clapped their hands in appreciation as Pascual and about five nuns joined them.

Querol said the farmers, the first group of

marchers to get close to the Palace in years, were permitted to proceed because they had been assessed as a peaceful gathering.

Upon reaching the J.B. Laurel gate, where policemen stood their ground, a number of farmers took turns speaking through the megaphone to express disappointment at the prolonged resolution of their claim.

"We hope you will understand us," one said, his voice cracking. "Land is what we need to live and support our children. There in the Palace is a parent who will not allow us to even get near the gate. It's like that parent is abandoning his children."

Said another: "We've walked 1,700 km but no one is paying attention to our claim. How much farther do we have to walk for the issue to be resolved?"

At about 2 p.m., the farmers left, crossed Nagtahan Bridge and headed for Caritas Manila.

Hog farm

At the Shangri-la, Pangandaman said a team he had sent to investigate the farmers' complaint that the land conversion order on the disputed property had submitted its recommendation.

He declined to divulge the findings of the team, saying only that "there is indeed a development of a hog farm" on the property.

He said the DAR would determine whether the development of a hog farm was a violation of the land conversion order.

"If I find out there are violations in the conversion order, it will be revoked," he said. *With reports from Jerome Aning and Christine O. Avendano*

TIMELINE

1990—THE DEPARTMENT OF Agrarian Reform places the 144-hectare estate owned by the Quisumbing family in Sarangay San Vicente in Sumilao, Bukidnon, under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

But DAR suspends implementation because the property is still under a 10-year Crop Producer and Grower Agreement between the landowner and Del Monte Philippines.

April 1994—The agreement

Sept. 25, 1995—The estate is awarded to Higaonon farmers. DAR issues Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) to 137 farmers.

Oct. 13, 1995—The CLOAs are entered into the Sumilao Register of Deeds. These form the basis of the farmers' claim of vested rights over the estate.

March 29, 1996—Executive Secretary Ruben Torres issues an order allowing the conversion of the property from purely agricultural to agro-industrial use.

In applying for reclassification, the Norberto Quisumbing Sr. Management and Development Corp. had said it planned to set up a development academy, a cultural center, an institute for livelihood science, a museum, a library, a golf course, a sports development complex, an agro-industrial park, forest development and support facilities, and a hotel, restaurant, and housing project and others.

Oct. 9, 1997—Fifteen farmers start a 28-day hunger strike in front of the DAR central office in Quezon City.

Nov. 6, 1997—President Fidel Ramos modifies Torres' order, limits the conversion to 44 hectares and approves 100 hectares for distribution to farmers.

April 1999—The Supreme Court denies with finality the motions for reconsideration filed by the claimants and upholds Torres' order despite opposition from DAR officials.

The decision also voids the CLOAs issued to the farmers. Under CARP implementing rules, the estate's owners have five years to implement the new land-use plan.

December 1999—Robin Lessson, one of the farmers in the 1997 hunger strike, commits suicide in protest of the Supreme Court decision.

Feb. 6, 2002—The Quisumbing family sells part of the property to San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI), a subsidiary of San Miguel Corp. (SMC). But farmers claim that "much of the land" remains idle.

The land is put under lease agreement with SMFI subsidiary Monterey Food Corp. (MFC). **Nov. 3, 2004**—Farmers file a petition for revocation of the conversion order, saying the five-year period for the conversion of the estate's use for agro-industrial purposes has ended. They claim that none of the development projects promised by the Quisumbings has taken place.

July 10, 2006—MFC submits "Revised Development Plan for Sumilao Property" to DAR as a way of asking whether the development of the property into a hog farm is "in accordance with ap-

proved conversion of the property into agro-industrial use."

Oct. 27, 2006—Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman dismisses the farmers' petition, saying DAR has no jurisdiction over the matter as it was the Office of the President that allowed the conversion in March 1996.

Nov. 27, 2006—DAR confirms revised development plan submitted by MFC, says the Sumilao Hog Farm project is "consistent" with the "agro-industrial use" clause cited in the March 1996 ruling by the Office of the President.

Nov. 30, 2006—Farmers lodge a petition at the Office of the President seeking the cancellation/revocation of land conversion.

Oct. 3, 2007—The Office of the President junks the petition.

Oct. 10—Farmers begin a 1,700-kilometer march from their home village of San Vicente in Sumilao to Manila, with the intention of reaching Metro Manila in time for the observance of International Human Rights Day on Dec. 10.

Their "Walk for Sumilao Land, Walk for Justice" is aimed at dramatizing their demand to be finally installed in the estate.

Oct. 23—Farmers complete the march's Mindanao leg which totaled 435 km from Sumilao to Surigao City.

Oct. 25—They start the Visayas leg of the march.

Nov. 16—The Office of the President remands dispute to DAR, says the agency has the expertise on the factual issues raised by the farmers.

Dec. 3—Farmers arrive in Metro Manila. They begin their "tour" the following day and are met by members of militant groups at the Manila Film Center. They are later escorted to the Senate in Pasay City, where they are met by a number of senators.

Dec. 5—Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales expresses support for the farmers, says he has asked Pres. den Macapaga-Arroyo to give the estate to the farmers.

Farmers perform a tribal ritual in front of SMC main office in Pasig City to protest the corporation's "writing or unwitting participation in the mockery of agrarian reform."

DAR again counsels: says the law that created CARP does not state that a new owner of a disputed property is bound by the conversion pledges made by the previous owner.

Pangandaman adds that the five-year implementing period started when the development permits were issued by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board. SMC lawyer Wilfredo Peñafor says permits were issued only in 2004.

Dec. 6—Farmers and their supporters picket the House of Representatives to call the lawmakers' attention to their plight.

Pangandaman meets with the farmers to say he is giving contending parties three days to submit position papers before he makes his decision.

Source: Inquirer Archives Compiled by Kate Pedrosa, Inquirer Research

After accounting mixup, '1/4 Filipino' is Miss California

From page A1

Miss Los Angeles, Christina Silva, only to backtrack days later, blaming a vote tabulation error.

Silva hired a lawyer, booked an appearance on "Ellen," and won support from a Los Angeles Times columnist who murmured in print of hanging chads. Silva, 24, lives in LA's Koreatown and is of Ecuadorian and Mexican descent. Was she too ethnic? Too urban? Did judges find some dirty secret in her past at the last minute?

'Human error'

California pageant executive director Keith Lewis stared out at cameras in a Beverly Hilton conference room hoping to tamp down speculation.

"This was a human error. We have apologized for it," he said. "I believe in the integrity by which we must stand. I'm here today to right that wrong of crowning the incorrect person."

To that end, last year's winner Meagan Tandy emerged wearing a black dress, and placed a tiara on Beezley's head to the sound of cheers from her parents and brothers.

"It is bittersweet," Beezley said of her win. "I just want her to know that it was

not my fault nor her fault. This has been very hard for the both of us."

At any rate, it's another hit for Donald Trump's Miss USA pageant, which in the past year has seen state-level winners lose their titles for appearing in risqué pictures and getting pregnant. Trump personally gave the overall winner, Tara Conner, a second chance after she was seen boozing at New York clubs and agreed to enter rehab.

Judges approached Lewis immediately after the Nov. 25 pageant finals in Los Angeles, concerned that their votes hadn't been correctly tallied. Lewis asked for a recount, and it turned out the points assigned to finalists had been reversed. He said he broke the news to Silva in a "lengthy, heartfelt, truthful" conversation, then the two of them called Beezley.

'Something fishy'

Beezley interrupted her waitress shift at DiNapoli's Firehouse Pizza restaurant in Barstow to take the call from the two of them on speakerphone. Beezley said Silva told her about the error and congratulated her, saying, "I do not want this crown and sash if I didn't rightfully win it."

The pageant let Silva, now listed as second runner-up, keep all her accoutrements—the sash, the crown, the



WILL THE REAL MISS CALIFORNIA PLEASE STAND UP? An accounting mix-up crowned Christina Silva (at left) Miss California during the Nov. 25 beauty pageant in Los Angeles. When the judges later complained, she was asked to give up the title to Raquel Beezley, the 2nd runnerup. Beezley posed with crown and sash at a news conference in Beverly Hills on Thursday.

necklace—and gave her \$1,500 entry fee back. But Silva now says she felt unfairly pressured to relinquish her title, and feels something is fishy about the



"accountant error" reason supplied by organizers. "Everything's inaccurate and it's not consistent," Silva told Ellen DeGeneres

during an "Ellen" show broadcast Thursday. "All I could do was shake and cry, just cry in my mom's arms."

Fil-Am

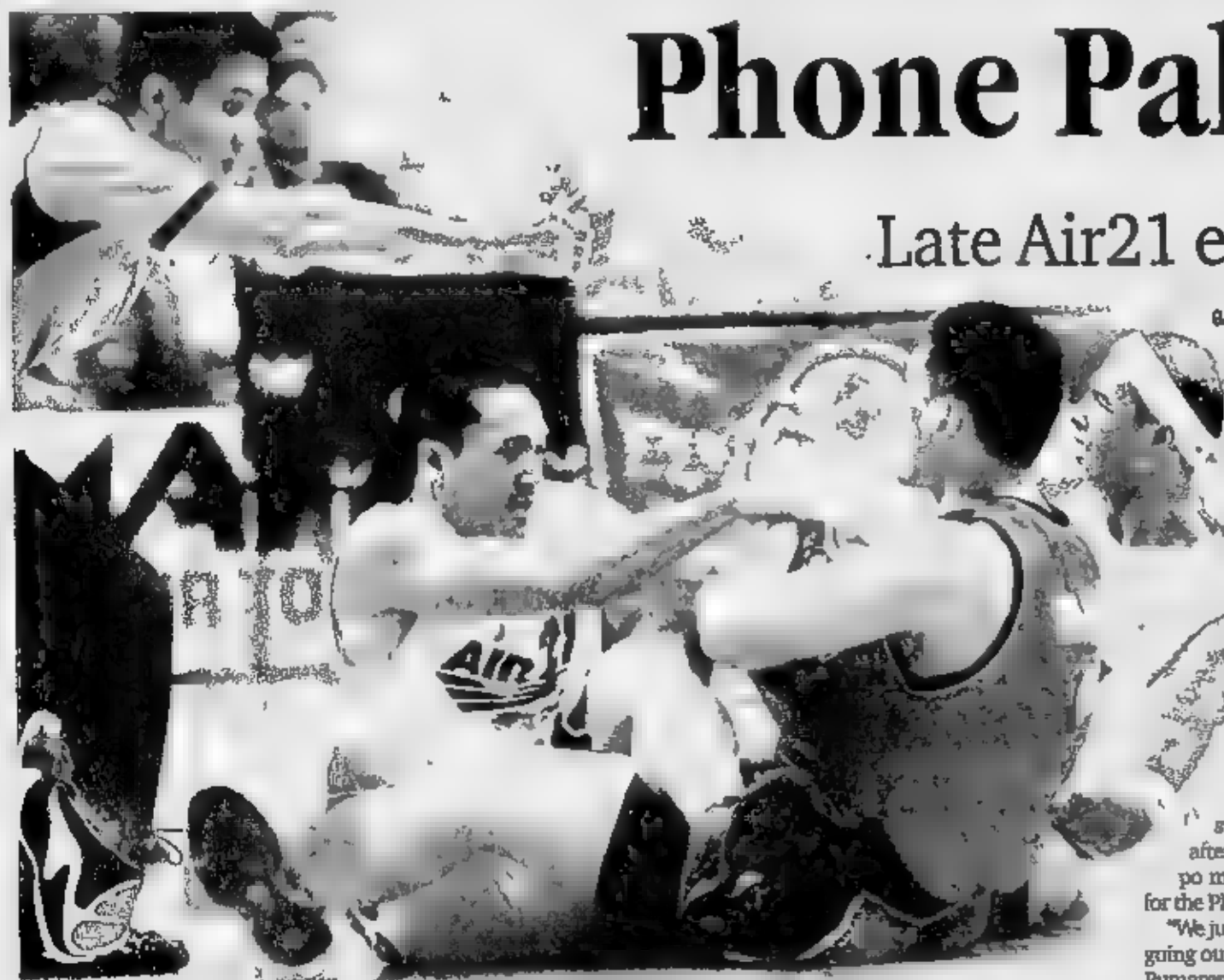
Beezley's mother Christine Parrish said she was upset about speculation her daughter was bumped up because she appears less ethnic. "I heard somebody calling her a whitey! It's sad," she said, noting that Beezley is one-fourth Filipino, had won a pageant in Mazatlan, Mexico, and judged a pageant in the Philippines.

Beezley, who hid her shaking hands behind a desk after being crowned, was disappointed that she and Silva would be lumped in with other scandals in Trump's pageant empire.

"The thing is, we didn't do anything wrong," she said. "We're both innocent in this case. It's crazy."

Beezley, who attends Barstow Community College, will represent California in April in the Miss USA pageant, and hopes to become a correspondent for "Access Hollywood."

There was also a happy ending for Silva. DeGeneres crowned her Miss Ellen and gave her a yearlong modeling contract and a year's worth of styling by Ken Paves or Prive hair salons. **AP**



AIR21's Wynne Arboleda (left) and Arwind Santos lock up Ginebra's Billy Mamaril in a battle for possession.

Phone Pals trip Giants

Late Air21 errors give Ginebra payback

GAME TODAY (San Sebastian-Cavite Gym)
4:30 p.m.—Red Bull vs Magnolia

By June Navarro

THE TALK 'N TEXT PHONE PALS escaped with a 101-98 victory over the Purefoods TJ Giants last night in a game that was decided at the stripe in the dying seconds of their match in the Smart-PRA Philippine Cup at the Cuneta Astrodome.

While the Giants muffed four of their last five charities, capped by a James Yap split, the Phone Pals snapped a mini-slide by nailing four straight freebies in the end.

Donbel Belano converted the assurance free throw with 8.5 ticks left after Jimmy Alapag and Yancy De Ocampo made theirs inside the last 30 seconds for the Phone Pals' sixth win in 12 games.

"We just kept pounding when things weren't going our way," said Talk 'N Text coach Derrick Pumaren. "We lost two straight games prior to this one and we didn't want another defeat."

The Phone Pals' victory denied the TJ Giants at rewriting their franchise history.

The Giants could have tied a 15-year franchise record with a victory last night, that would have enabled them to match their 10-2 start in the 1992 All-Philippine wars.

Instead, the Giants slipped to 9-3 largely because the team's normally reliable shooters, Yap and Peter June Simon missed their free throws when it mattered the most.

Yap and Simon led Purefoods with 25 and 22 points respectively.

In the first game, Barangay Ginebra nearly threw away a 19-point lead before holding off Air21, 108-103.

Rommel Adducul actually kicked off Purefoods' free throw woes, missing two attempts from the stripe. Simon followed suit, failing to complete a three-point play.

Yap then had a split in the last 28 seconds to seal the Giants' doom.

With three players—Yap, Simon and Kerby Raymundo, in the top 10 free-throw shooting list, the Giants are the No. 1 in that department with their conference-best 74.4 percent.

The Gin Kings cashed in on a pair of endgame boo-boos committed by the Express—Wynne Arboleda fumbled on a double dribble and rookie JC Intal committed a traveling violation in the last five seconds—to clinch their fifth win in 12 games.

Though the Kings avenged their first-round defeat to the Express, coach Jong Uichico wasn't absolutely satisfied about it.

"We have to get over that hump where we always play sloppy in the end," said Uichico, whose Kings lost to the Alaska Aces in an out-of-town game last week after losing steam in the stretch.

"We're still in the process of getting over that stigma, if that's what you call it," Uichico added.

The Kings zoomed to a 94-75 spread but the Express unloaded a 13-0 bomb on fastbreak plays with Arwind Santos and Ranidel De Ocampo playing pivotal roles.

The Express absorbed their sixth defeat in 11 outings.

The scores:

GINEBRA 108—Merk 19, Heisterbrand 18, Cagulo 16, Mamaril 15, Salvacion 11, Tubid 10, Reavis 9, Ardad 8, Macapagal 2, Aquino 0.

AIR21 103—Santos 32, Cuneta 23, De Ocampo 14, Arboleda 13, Kramer 7, Se 5, Chie 4, Intal 3, Sotio 2, Cruz 0, Bakoy 0.

Quarters: 21-22, 46-52, 62-73, 108-103

TALK 'N TEXT 181—Alapag 18, Washington 14, Carey 13, De Ocampo 13, Paek 10, Alado 10, Rituale 9, Cardona 7, Belano 7, Aljama 0, Ferrera 0.

PUREFOODS 98—Yap 25, Simon 22, Raymundo 19, Lanteta 13, Adducul 8, Evangelista 5, Yap 4, Salvador 2, Pingris 0, Caglay 0, Yeo 0.

Quarters: 23-28, 44-48, 71-81, 101-98



AP TRAN: \$5 for her picture

Thais dominate SEAG track events

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND—Thailand dominated the first day of track and field Friday at the Southeast Asian Games, winning six of the nine gold medals on offer. Thailand now has 28 golds to lead the medal standings, with Vietnam moving into second place with 13 golds.

However, Indonesia's Suryo Agung Wibowo won the men's 100 meter final, setting a new SEA Games record of 10.25 seconds to edge Thailand's Wacharn Sondee in

second and Malaysia's A. Hadi Mohamad Noor Imran in third.

Vietnam's Thi Huong Vu won the women's 100 race in 11.47 seconds despite a slow start, ahead of Thailand's Nongnuch Sanrat and Indonesia's Irene Truitje Joseph.

Thailand's Jutamass Tawoncharoen set the day's best time by winning her semifinal in 11.38 but

More Sports, SEA Games stories A25 to A29

did not take her place in the final because of an injury.

Four other SEA Games records were

also broken during the day.

Vietnam's Truong Thanh Hang had the most dominant performance so far, bettering her own record to win the women's 1,500 meters in 4 minutes, 11.60 seconds. AP

Miss Vietnam Sports steals show—and hearts

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND—Usually the star attractions at the athletes' village of the Southeast Asian Games are the smattering of world-class competitors, but for the 2007 edition, it is the glamorous Miss Vietnam Sports.

The 20-year-old Tran Thi Quynh is a former national team volleyball player but is at the 2007 event to show moral support for her team, and is getting plenty of attention, at times too much.

An athletes village function preceding

the Games saw her besieged by male competitors eager to get a photo with her.

"Five dollars for each picture," a Vietnamese official shouted to the crowd as it gathered around her.

A police officer deployed at the village said a Vietnamese male reporter scaled the fence of the village Tuesday and was attempting to get to the Vietnamese women's section in an effort to get a photo of her.

"I am here to give moral support and to

lift the spirit of Vietnam's athletes, and I am confident that our team will perform well and reach a good ranking in the competition," Tran Thi Quynh said.

ENVIRONMENTAL sentiment was prominent in the opening ceremony Thursday, but organizers could be accused of sending mixed messages as they handed out thousands of disposable plastic toys.

Following the lighting of the cauldron

at the main stadium, spectators witnessed an elaborate environmental promotion as the entire infield was draped with a pink banner with the words "Save the World."

Girls dressed in green tutus and floral wreaths, and boys in forest sprite outfits were attacked by long-faced ghosts in neon orange, symbolizing global warming.

They were then joined by more youths, waving potted plants.

14-year-old So RP's newest grandmaster; Ni champ

From page A1

and 28 days, the seventh youngest in the world to do so.

Unable to gain headway with the white pieces, So readily accepted Maghami's truce offer after 19 moves of the Sicilian Najdorf to qualify as the country's eighth and youngest GM.

He joins Eugene Torre, who became Asia's first GM in 1974, the late Rosendo Balinas (1976), Rogelio Antonio Jr. (1998), Buenaventura "Bong" Villamayor (2000), Nelson Mariano (2004), Mark Paragua (2005) and Darwin Laylo (2007) in the elite list of Filipino chess players.

"Masayang-masaya po ako. Magandang pamasko na uo (GM title) sa akin, (I'm very happy. This is already a beautiful Christmas gift for me)," said So, who finished the nine-round Pichay Cup held at the Duty Free Fiesta Mall in Parañaque City with 6 points, a full point behind champion GM Ni Hua of China and half a point off Torre, Paragua and Singaporean GM Zhang Zhong.

The former Promi whiz kid, second of three children of accountants William and Eleanor So, obtained his first GM result in the Bad Wiessee Open in Germany in November 2006, but got stalled in his next international tournaments.

Dedicating at least four hours to chess study everyday, So expanded his game-repertoire and eventually clinched his second GM norm in the World Junior Chess Championships in Yerevan, Armenia, in September.

So, a high school sophomore of St. Francis of Assisi College System-Bacolod, also holds the distinction of being the country's youngest chess Olympian at 12 in Turin, Italy, in 2006, and youngest National Junior Open champion at 13 in May.

So is regarded as the world's



WESLEY SO: The future of Philippine chess lies in his brilliant mind.

strongest player in his age-group with an Elo rating of 2531, edging Indian GM Parimarjan Negi (born 1993, Elo 2514). His strength was amply proven when So won this year's World Under 16 Team Championship Board 1 gold medal in Singapore with a phenomenal score of 9.5 points out of a perfect 10.

"This is a dream come true for Wesley," said his mother Eleanor, comptroller of the De La Salle Health Sciences Institute in Dasmariñas, Cavite. "I'm very thankful his hard work and dedication has been rewarded."

So became the second player to earn

his GM title since former Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay took over the presidency of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines last year.

The 27-year-old Laylo clinched his GM title by landing seventh in the sixth Asian Individual Chess Championship held at the Cebu International Convention Center in Mandaue City in September.

Pichay lauded So's achievement.

"This is really a memorable year for local chess. We produced not only one but two GMs in a span of three months and we are confident we can have more GMs next year," said Pichay, who

has already hosted five major international chess tournaments in his incumbency.

NCFP secretary general Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino said So's achievement will encourage local chess players to devote more time to the game.

Those who earned their GM titles at an earlier age than So were Sergey Karjakin of Ukraine (12 years and seven months), Parimarjan Negi of India (13 years, three months and 22 days), Magnus Carlsen of Norway (13 years, three months and 27 days), Bu Xiangzhi of China (13 years, 10 months

and 13 days), Teimour Radjabov of Azerbaijan (14 years and 14 days), and Ruslan Ponomarev of Ukraine (14 years, 17 days).

So, currently the country's second-ranked player with Torre, dislodged GM Etienne Bacrot of France, who got his GM title at 14 years and two months, at seventh spot.

By comparison, the great Bobby Fischer of the United States was 15 years, six months and one day when he became a GM in 1958.

The top-seeded Ni and Torre drew their match after 42 moves of the Larsen opening, as did Paragua and Zhang in only 10 moves of the Ruy Lopez.

Ni, who tied for first place with compatriot GM Li Chao in the second President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Cup last month, bagged the top prize of \$5,000. Paragua, Zhong and Torre each pocketed \$3,000.

Eight players, led by So and unheralded Deniel Causo, shared fifth to 12th places and received \$1,062 each.

Bunched with them at six points were GM Rogelio Antonio Jr. and Fide Master Fernie Donguines, who split the point after 78 moves of the Torre Attack; and Li and IM Jayson Gonzales, who also halved the point.

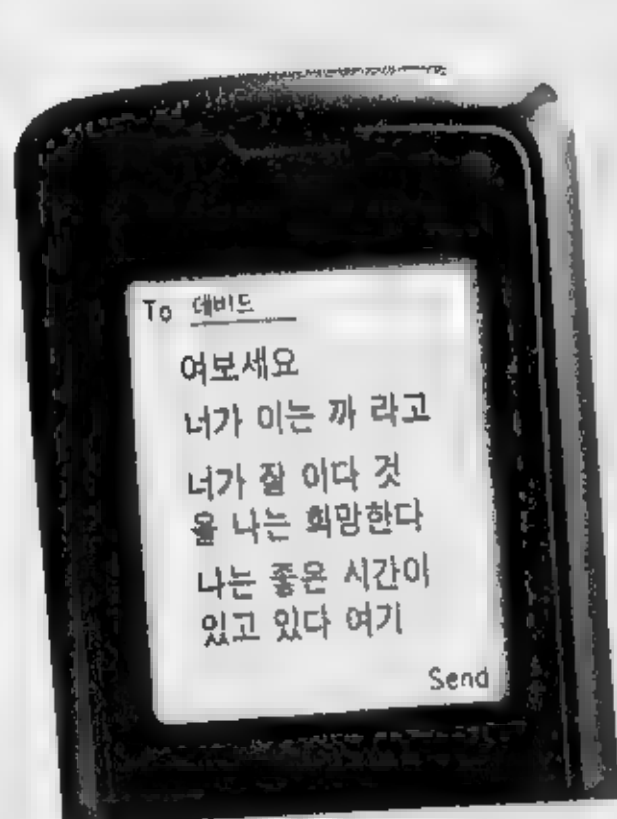
Singapore-based Filipino IM Julio Catalano Sadorra also earned his first GM result after drawing with GM Dao Thien Hai of Vietnam and finishing with 5.5 points. Causo, on the other hand, clinched his first IM result after stunning Laylo.

Final standings:

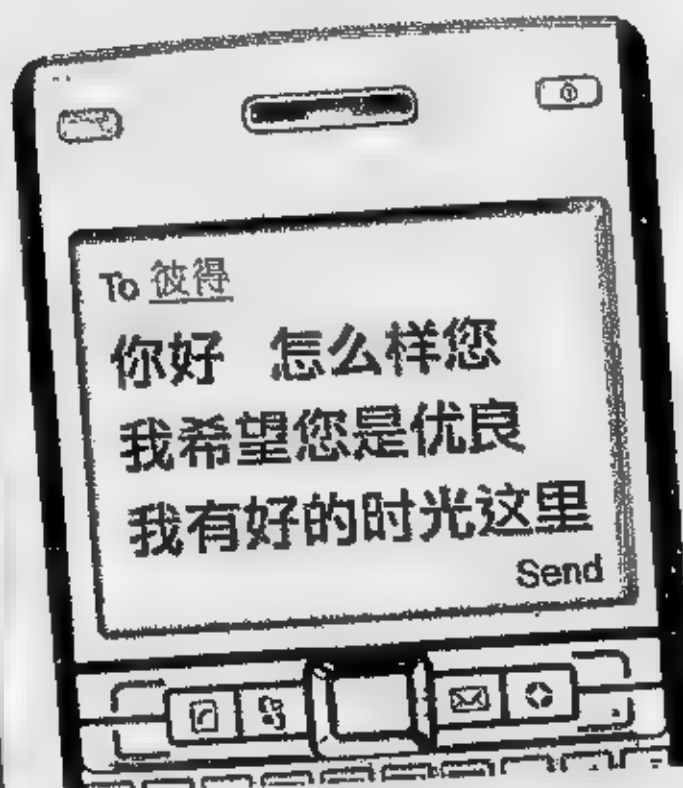
7 points — H. Ni (China), 6.5 — M. Paragua (RP), Z. Zhong (Singapore), E. Torre (RP); 6 — W. So (RP), D. Causo (RP), C. Li (China), E. Maghami (Iran), F. Donguines (RP), R. Antonio (RP), J. Gonzales (RP), W. Zhou (China), 5.5 — J. Sadorra (RP), R. Elison (RP), D.T. Hai (Vietnam), N.A. Dung (Vietnam), J. Gomez (RP), E. Sadorra (RP), H. Nouri (RP), R. Deblao (RP), S. Savarino (RP), G. Garma (RP), Y. Li (China), R. Banood (RP)

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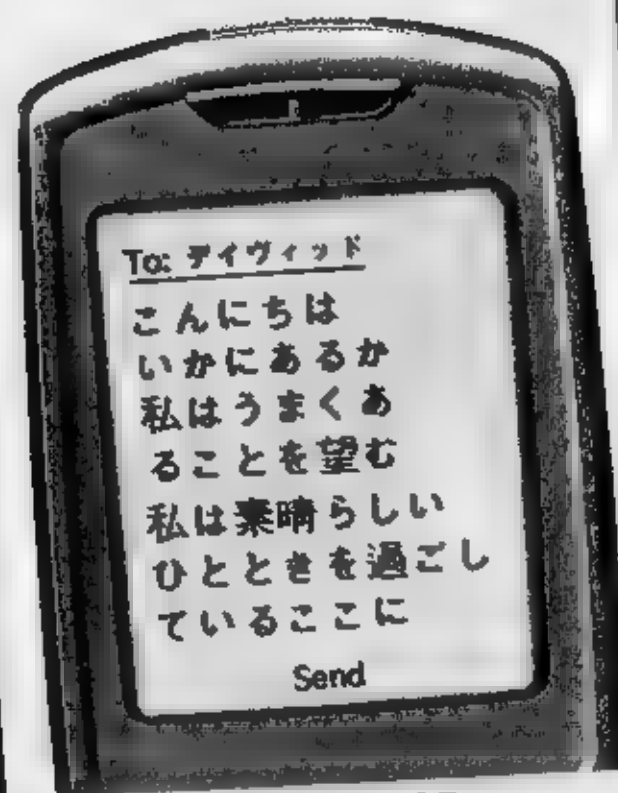
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NBI raids alleged cybersex den

Pasig company given license as call center

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION raided Wednesday what was supposed to be a call center but which allegedly operated as a cybersex den in Pasig City.

Agents of the NBI Special Action Unit raided American Chat Link Inc. at 12th floor, Tycoon Center, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. The company has over 400 employees operating on four shifts.

The NBI said operators of the cybersex den could be charged with violation of Article 201 of the Revised Penal Code (Immoral doctrines, obscene publication, exhibition and indecent shows).

They seized 155 computers allegedly used in cyber pornography, 12 Internet hubs, several Internet servers and documents, including a list of over 200 adult sites allegedly used in the illegal operation.

The estimated value of the seized items was P3-P4 million.

Lawyer Angelito Magno, chief of the NBI-SAU, said the firm was engaged in online dating and selling, enhancing and creation of pornographic websites.

He said it was incorporated

to operate, maintain and do business as a call center.

"But apparently (being a call center) was only a disguise for its real (business) of providing obscene and immoral pornographic materials for exhibition to foreign and local clients, most of whom were elderly men," the NBI official said. Payments to the firm were made through credit cards.

Cybersex den operators sell membership to an adult website.

Employees would set up profiles and chat online, pretending they were the ones on the profiles. Clients were charged a \$5 subscription fee for 24-hour access, Magno said.

The NBI conducted the raid after month-long surveillance operations. It was armed with a search warrant from Pasig City Judge Rodolfo Bonifacio.

Magno said computer hard drives were now being examined by the NBI Anti Fraud and Computer Crimes Division.



YOU BETTER WATCH OUT!

A traffic enforcer dressed as Santa Claus directs traffic along McKinley Road inside Taguig City's The Fort.

EDWIN BACASNAS

Recycled lights for Muntinlupa's roads

By Julie M. Aurelio

RECYCLED STREETLIGHTS will soon lend a brighter glow to Muntinlupa City's side streets.

The city government recently announced that it would make use of old streetlights from the main thoroughfares to light up the city's secondary roads and alleys at night.

Mayor Aldrin San Pedro said

well-lit primary and secondary streets means fewer road accidents involving motorists and pedestrians alike.

"What we did was to install streetlights to guide cars at night. This has resulted in a safe driving experience for everyone using Susana Heights," he added.

The 8-year-old streetlights along the National Road from Barangay

Tunasan to Alabang will be replaced with modern lampposts. The old ones will not be discarded but transferred to secondary roads near the National Road.

New lampposts were also installed recently at the Susana Heights Road in Barangay Tunasan which links the city to San Pedro, Laguna and the Southern Luzon Expressway.

Electric bike patrol teams roam Pasig malls

By Kristine L. Alave

THE EASTERN POLICE DISTRICT (EPD) has deployed four electric bikes in Pasig City to help patrol crowded shopping centers and public spaces.

Two of the four three-wheeled electric bikes are used in the Metrowalk Shopping Center. The other two, EPD chief Senior Supt. Nilo dela Cruz said, would be used in other areas, as needed.

Dela Cruz said the EPD acquired the scooters last month.

"The scooters are very convenient for the police. It's faster, it gives them a higher vantage point. The police get to be taller by eight inches," Dela Cruz said.

Since the policemen would stand out in a crowd, the public can easily spot them, the EPD chief said. "This gives the public a sense of security," he added.

Dela Cruz said increased police visibility was in accordance with the Philippine National Police "Mamang Pulis" program that aimed to bring the police force closer to the people.



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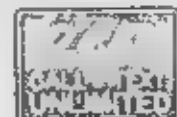
"Wala na ang culture na nagtitipid ng load because with Sun's Call & Text Unlimited, we can call each other anytime," says Marivic.

All field and line supervisors use Sun Cellular to monitor the Victory Liner bus fleet. Even their drivers and conductors now use Sun Cellular.

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"In the event of accidents, traffic or floods, they contact the head office in Manila, wherever in North Luzon they may be," says Marivic. Decision-making and reaction time is cut, and communication among the eight major terminals and sub-terminals in North Luzon is more efficient.

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Pasay City to build transport terminal

By Julie M. Aurelio

AN INTERMODAL TRANSPORT terminal in Pasay City is being planned to ease traffic in the Taft Avenue-Rotunda area.

The terminal is expected to help reduce the number of vehicles fighting for passengers and road space.

Having a new terminal would make commuting between Manila and Cavite province easier, Pasay officials said.

The Southwest Intermodal Terminal Center will be built near the Mall of Asia.

The proposal was raised during the first Pasay City Summit on Transport and Traffic Management held recently at the Heritage Hotel.

City public information officer Manny Aun said participants from local government offices and transport groups identified the city's top three traffic problems, including colorum (illegal) buses plying major thoroughfares and obstructions of side streets by pedicabs, tricycles and other vehicles.

Aun said colorum buses caused traffic in the Maibay and Taft Rotunda areas near the MRT and the LRT.

Pedicabs and tricycles, he said, parked on side streets, causing buildups in secondary roads.

Under the proposal, buses and jeepneys would stay in designated sections at the airconditioned terminal, and hopefully reduce the number of vehicles vying for passengers on the road.

The terminal is a joint project of the national government and the Pasay City government under Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad.

Arrogance of power goes down to the ranks

THE ARROGANCE OF POWER shown by Interior Secretary Ronnie Puno, who said he would have media people arrested again if the Peninsula incident were repeated, has filtered down to the lower ranks in the police.

Quezon City Police District Supt. Franklin Moises Mabang allegedly drove GMA-7 reporter Rawna Crisostomo out of his office with an M-16 rifle. Crisostomo was just following up an upduction story at the latter's office.

Mabang, chief of the QCPD Criminal Investigation Unit, didn't care whether or not Crisostomo's camera crew was recording his ungentlemanly conduct.

This official is a member of

Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 1985 who is supposed to be "an officer and a gentleman."

Well, when the higher-ups are arrogant, what can you expect from people in the lower notches of the totem pole?

May the Court of Appeals justices, who affirmed a lower court's decision convicting of rape a complete paralytic, not be overtaken by karmic justice.

May their children or close relatives not suffer what quadriplegic Jeff Quesada is suffering right now because of their decision.

Por Dios por santo, those justices should have taken a glimpse of the wheelchair-bound Jeff before condemn-

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



ing him to a life in prison!

The Bureau of Immigration has ruled that Saudi resident Fauzi Bondagji is an undesirable alien.

The immigration bureau found that Bondagji has violated labor laws and is reportedly a threat to national security.

But he is not being deported reportedly because of pressure being exerted by the Saudi ambassador to the Philippines on Immigration Commissioner

Nonoy Libanan and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

This is what our government is to Arab countries that supply the country much needed oil: a doormat.

Media outlets in Manila are raising a howl over the arrest and detention of their reporters in the Peninsula incident, but have forgotten the plight of Alexander "Lex" Adonis who is in jail after being convicted of libel.

"Now I know that you know how it feels to be jailed for no crime at all," said Adonis, a former radio commentator of Radyo Bombo in Davao City, in a letter sent to his colleagues in Manila.

Adonis was found guilty af-

ter he failed to attend hearings on the case filed against him by a political bigwig in the city. His coaccused were acquitted.

The former commentator drew the ire of the politician who he alleged, was seen running naked in a hotel in Manila.

The politician was reportedly running away from his girlfriend's husband who caught them in bed.

Lex, I know how it feels to be left alone by your colleagues in media when the chips are down.

Just hang in there, because help is on the way.

Some Manila lawyers have promised to take up the cudgels for you.

ENGINEERING LICENSURE TESTS

Board examinees offered two options

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE CIVIL ENGINEERING Against Retake Students' Union, an association of graduates opposed to a new set of examinations to be given Jan. 12, has given close to 5,000 board examinees until next week to accept or deny the optional retake of the November licensure exams ordered by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC).

Gregory Gabelo, head of the union's media and communications committee, said they are

now gathering results of a consensus of examinees all throughout the country regarding the PRC decision. The deadline of the consensus is on Dec. 12, Gabelo said.

The PRC suggested an optional retake for the examinees on Jan. 12 during a closed-door meeting with school representatives and lawyers of the union on Thursday.

"The optional retake can be taken by the examinees while the investigation is still ongoing," Gabelo explained.

If an examinee passes the re-

take, the PRC would recognize the results, regardless of the result of the investigation.

"But if an examinee fails on the retake but passed the November 2007 board exams, the civil engineering graduate will still get a passing rate if the union's petition succeeds," Gabelo said.

On Nov. 26, the PRC announced that the test results in two of three subjects—Hydraulics and Geotechnical Engineering and Structural Engineering and Construction—would be nullified after two examinees were caught cheating in the two areas. The

two were found to have used cell phones which contained answers to 30 questions, 21 of which turned out to be correct.

The PRC also said the "unusually high grades" the examinees obtained in the hydraulics subject were "statistically improbable."

However, the examinees emphasized in their petition that there was no evidence linking the high grades they obtained to the discovery of the use of the mobile phones.

Gabelo said that during the meeting, the PRC had attested that cheating took place at the

Cagayan de Oro testing center. The incident is now undergoing investigation, the Commission's officials said.

"The PRC also confirmed during the meeting that there were no irregularities in the hydraulics subject, but pointed out that the unusual high grade was an irregularity in itself," Gabelo said.

The union official said that lawyer Jobert Pahliga, who represents the graduates, would file a motion to speed up the investigation and the PRC's decision on the issue.

Pasay's center by the bay to showcase Pinoy Christmas

By Tina G. Santos

A UNIQUE FILIPINO CHRISTMAS celebration will be presented Dec. 18-22 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Complex on Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

The CCP grounds beside Manila Bay will be filled with lights and sounds as the CPP and Manila Broadcasting Company mount a series of activities showcasing various Filipino Christmas traditions.

"Paskong Pinoy" will kick-off on Dec. 18, 5 a.m., with Simbang Gabi at the CCP front lawn.

A ceremonial lighting of Bauan lanterns, made of various indigenous materials by students of the Bauan National High School in

Batangas, will follow at 2 p.m. at the CCP Little Theater.

"Sopas, Sinig at Sorbetes (Food to Taste, Arts to Appreciate)," an annual feeding and arts appreciation program of the CCP, will be held for 1,200 underprivileged children from poor communities. Afterwards, the children will be treated to free tours and rides at nearby Star City.

According to Chris Millado, CCP associate artistic director, the production will incorporate the Filipino spirit of bayanihan and cultural diaspora. It will feature young showbiz personalities, together with the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group's Vamos a Belen artists, the Angono H.gantes, circus perform-

ers and ballet dancers. The "Panunuluyan," which will start at 6.30 p.m., will be capped by a performance of a 1,000-voice choir.

Other highlights of "Paskong Pinoy" include "Flaw ng Pasko," a lantern-float competition among fine arts, engineering and architecture students of colleges, universities and technical institutes.

The champion team will receive P200,000 plus a trophy and other gifts courtesy of Star City, while second and third placers will receive P100,000 and P50,000, respectively.

"Hlmig ng Pasko," on the other hand, is a choral competition featuring children's chorale groups in the metropolis.

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3 BULACAN PROPERTY Purok 4, Brgy. Santissima Trinidad, Maricao City, Bulacan	3,397 sq.m.	Residential Land	2,718,000.00
4 BOHOL PROPERTY Brgy. Dampas, Tagbilaran City, Bohol	551 sq.m.	Residential Lots (2 adjoining lots)	1,853,000.00
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- Pre-Bid Conference will be on December 18, 2007, Wednesday at 10:00 AM, Conference Room, The Livelihood Corporation, 7th Floor One Corporate Plaza, 845 A. Amalaz Avenue, Makati City.
- The sealed bids should be dropped at the designated drop box located at the security desk of the Livelihood Corporation, 7th Floor One Corporate Plaza, 845 A. Amalaz Avenue, Makati City on or before 10:00 AM on Friday, January 18, 2008.
- All bidders are enjoined to inspect the property/ies before submitting their bids.

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CIA destroyed 2 tapes showing interrogations

WASHINGTON—THE CENTRAL Intelligence Agency in 2005 destroyed at least two videotapes documenting the interrogation of two Qaida operatives in the agency's custody, a step it took in the midst of congressional and legal scrutiny about its secret detention program, according to current and former government officials.

The videotapes showed agency operatives in 2002 subjecting terrorism suspects—including

Abu Zubaydah, the first detainee in CIA custody—to severe interrogation techniques. They were destroyed in part because officers were concerned that tapes showing harsh interrogation methods could expose agency officials to risk of legal jeopardy, several officials said.

In a statement to employees on Thursday, Gen. Michael V. Hayden, the CIA director, said that the decision to destroy the tapes was made "within the CIA"

and that the reason was to protect the safety of undercover officers and because the tapes no longer had intelligence value.

The destruction of the tapes raises questions about whether agency officials withheld information from the courts and from the Sept. 11 commission about aspects of the program.

The recordings were not provided to a federal court hearing the case of the terror suspect Zacarias Moussaoui or to the

Sept. 11 commission, which had made formal requests to the CIA for transcripts and other documentary evidence taken from interrogations.

The disclosures about the tapes are likely to reignite the debate over laws that allow the CIA to use interrogation practices more severe than those allowed to other agencies.

Hayden said that the agency had acted "in line with the law" and said he was informing CIA

employees "because the press has learned" about the matter.

Hayden's statement said that the tapes posed a "serious security risk" and that if they had become public they would have exposed CIA officials "and their families to retaliation from al-Qaida and its sympathizers."

It was not clear who authorized the destruction of the tapes, but current and former government officials said the action was approved by officials within the

CIA's clandestine service.

In both 2003 and 2005, CIA lawyers told prosecutors in the Moussaoui case that the CIA did not possess recordings of interrogations sought by the judge.

Paul Giamigano, a CIA spokesperson, said that the court had sought tapes of "specific, named terrorists whose comments might have a bearing on the Moussaoui case" and that the videotapes destroyed were not of those individuals. **NYT**

WORLD BRIEFS

'Dear Mr. Chairman': Bush writes to Kim

WASHINGTON—President Bush, directly engaging the man he publicly called a "tyrant," wrote a letter to North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-il, in which he held out the prospect of normalized relations with the United States if North Korea fully discloses its nuclear programs and dismantles its nuclear reactor, administration officials said Thursday. The high-level personal missive from Bush to the leader of the country he placed in his "axis of evil" in 2002 was sent as US negotiators are struggling to get the secretive North Korean government to fully explain and disclose the extent, use and spread of its nuclear material and technology. At the same time, the United States is also urging other nations to maintain pressure on Iran in the wake of a new assessment that Tehran halted nuclear weapons work in 2003. Bush began with the salutation "Dear Mr. Chairman" and urged the enigmatic North Korean leader to reveal all of his country's past and present nuclear work. "I want to emphasize that the declaration must be complete and accurate if we are to continue our progress," the letter said, according to a senior administration official.

NYT

Parcel bomb explodes in Paris legal office

PARIS—Baffled police were Friday looking for motives after a parcel bomb exploded at a legal office in central Paris killing a secretary and seriously injuring a lawyer in an attack condemned by French Prime Minister Francois Fillon as barbaric. Several other people were lightly hurt in Thursday's unclaimed blast on the fourth floor of a building in the capital's fashionable eighth arrondissement or district.

AFP

2.38M people in US state, federal jails

ABOUT one in every 31 adults in the United States was in prison, in jail or on supervised release at the end of last year, the Department of Justice reported Wednesday. An estimated 2.38 million people were incarcerated in state and federal facilities, an increase of 2.8 percent over 2005, while a record 5 million people were on parole or probation, an increase of 1.8 percent. Immigration detention facilities had the greatest growth rate last year. The number of people held in Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facilities grew 43 percent, to 14,482 from 10,104. The data reflect deep racial disparities in the nation's corrections institutions, with a record 905,600 black inmates in prisons and state and local jails. In several states, incarceration rates for blacks were more than 10 times the rate of whites. In Iowa, for example, blacks were imprisoned at 13.6 times the rate of whites, according to an analysis of the data by the Sentencing Project, a research and advocacy group.

NYT



THE TRIAL IN PICTURE
Alexander Solzhenitsyn sits behind the glass in a Moscow court Oct. 29 in one of RNPS' pictures of the year. A judge handed out a life in prison sentence to Russia's "chessboard murderer" who was convicted of killing 48 people. **REUTERS**

105 dead after blast in China mining region

SHANGHAI, CHINA—A GAS explosion at a coal mine in northern China late Wednesday killed at least 105 people in one of the country's worst mining accidents this year, the official Xinhua news agency said Friday.

The explosion occurred in the city of Linfen, about 240 miles south of Taiyuan, the capital of Shanxi province, in a huge coal-producing region. The official media reports said at least 15 other miners had been rescued or had escaped on their own. It was unclear how many people had been working in the mine at the time of the accident.

Many of the rescued miners were hospitalized after the explosion, which took place at a mine operated by the Ruozhiyuan Mining Co.

Xinhua reported that the blast occurred at 11:15 p.m. Wednesday, but that the local

authorities were not told until 5 a.m. on Thursday. The death toll climbed during the day and reached 105 Friday after 26 bodies were recovered overnight.

The government said two mine officials, including the head of the mine, were being held by the police. Xinhua also reported that the accident may have been caused by illegal activity in an unauthorized area of the mine.

Coal mining accidents are a common occurrence in China, where on average more than 5,000 miners lose their lives every year, the worst accident rate in the world. Nearly every week, there are news reports of mining blasts, deaths, rescue efforts and teams of miners trapped in horrific circumstances. By comparison, there are typically about 30 mining deaths a year in the United States. **NYT**



National Transmission Corporation

December 8, 2007

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines

Supply, Delivery, Installation, Test and Commissioning of One (1) Unit Gyro Stabilized UV/Video/Thermal Imaging Powerline Inspection System (ATO-07-45531)

- The National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) through the Annual Corporate Budget of 2007 intends to apply the sum of PHILIPPINE PESOS FORTY FIVE MILLION PESOS (PHP 45,000,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payment under the contract for the Supply, Delivery, Installation, Test and Commissioning of One (1) Unit Gyro Stabilized UV/Video/Thermal Imaging Powerline Inspection System. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected.
- TransCo now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Supply, Delivery, Installation, Test and Commissioning of One (1) Unit Gyro Stabilized UV/Video/Thermal Imaging Powerline Inspection System. The duration of the contract is Two Hundred Ten (210) Calendar Days. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents. ITB Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar contract within the last fifteen (15) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed contract for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.
- Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents. ITB. The bidder with the lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
- Interested Bidders may obtain further information from TransCo and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., during working days starting December 22, 2007.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of PHP 5,000.00. The method of payment will be on cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
- TransCo will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on January 9, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the Training Center Building, National Transmission Corporation, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before the date and time specified in item 8 below. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and in the amount specified in Clause 22, Section III, Bid Data Sheet of the Bidding Documents or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
- Bid Opening shall be on January 22, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the Training Center Building, National Transmission Corporation, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the said address.
- The bidding is also open to foreign bidders with eligibility requirements described in Clause 3 above and in the Bidding Documents.
- TransCo reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Mr. R. D. NABONG
Manager, Bids & Contracts Management Department
Ground Floor, Power Center
National Transmission Corporation
Quezon Avenue Corner B. R. Road
1104 Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
Tel. No. (632) 981-2212; 981-2213; 921-2308
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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Bush under fire over dire Iran claims

WASHINGTON—THE WHITE HOUSE THURSDAY struggled to defend the dire warnings about Iran made by US President George W. Bush even after he had learned that Tehran had likely frozen its atomic weapons program in 2003.

A new US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) released on Monday formally endorsed that conclusion, which Bush had first heard about in August from US Director of National Intelligence Michael McConnell. On Aug. 28, Bush warned of a

"nuclear holocaust" if the Islamic republic developed nuclear weapons, and on Oct. 17 he warned that anyone interested in avoiding "World War III" should support US pressure on Tehran.

On Oct. 21, US Vice President Dick Cheney warned Iran to sus-

pend uranium enrichment or face "serious consequences"—the very language in the UN resolution on Iraq that the White House says justified the March 2003 invasion.

On Tuesday, the US president defended himself from Democratic charges of exaggerating the threat by saying that he had only been briefed on the NIE on Nov. 28 and suggesting that McConnell's earlier warning had been vague.

"In August, I think it was, Mike McConnell came in and said, 'we

have some new information.' He didn't tell me what the information was. He did tell me it was going to take a while to analyze," Bush told a press conference.

But White House spokesperson Dana Perino said one day later that McConnell had told Bush that he was looking into information that Tehran had frozen its atomic weapons quest, casting doubt on previous US charges.

McConnell "said that if the new information turns out to be

true, what we thought we knew for sure is right. Iran does in fact have a covert nuclear weapons program, but it may be suspended," the spokesperson said.

Confronted with the apparent contradiction between her comments and Bush's own words, Perino replied, "The president could have been more precise in that language. But the president was being truthful."

But some of Bush's Democratic critics, including candidates to succeed him in the November

2008 election, charged that Bush knew or should have known in August about the blockbuster finding that upended years of US rhetoric on Iran.

"Are you telling me a president who's briefed every single morning, who's fixated on Iran, is not told back in August that the tentative conclusion of 16 intelligence agencies in the United States government said they had abandoned their effort for a nuclear weapon in '03?" asked Sen. Joseph Biden. **AFP**

Police baffled why teen went on shooting rampage

OMAHA, NEBRASKA—AUTHORITIES Thursday searched for clues as to why a teenager armed with an assault rifle randomly opened fire on Christmas shoppers in a mall, killing at least eight before turning the gun on himself.

"It appears random and the duration of this event only lasted a few minutes," said Omaha police chief Thomas Warren.

Robert Hawkins, 19, left a suicide note saying he wanted to be "famous" and a surreal scene of carnage which is becoming familiar.

"The victims and their loved ones are in the prayers of Americans," President George W. Bush said Thursday.

"Our whole nation grieves with the people of Omaha." The carefree strains of holiday music were suddenly smothered by the sounds of rapid gunfire and screams Wednesday as Hawkins turned his gun on a group of shoppers and store employees on the third floor of an open department store, witnesses said.

And as terrified people hid behind clothing racks and ran for their lives, the youth dressed in a camouflage vest and carrying a black backpack leaned over a railing and shot at people on the



UNDATED photo of Angie Schuster, 36, among those killed in the Dec. 5 carnage. **AP**

escalator and floor below.

He managed to kill eight of the 13 people he shot with an AK-47 assault rifle, which he had stolen from his estranged stepfather.

A troubling portrait emerged Thursday of the disturbed youth who had been a ward of the state and spent time in substance abuse and mental health counseling after he was arrested as a teen.

The high school dropout who had recently broken up with his girlfriend and been arrested for underage drinking on Friday, cracked after he was fired from

his job at McDonald's after being accused of stealing \$17.

About an hour before the rampage began, Hawkins called the family who had taken him in after a brief stint on the streets.

He was upset about losing his job, said the woman who took the tall, bespectacled young man into her home in August 2006.

"I told him, 'Well just come on home, we'll talk about it—it's just not that big of a deal,'" Debora Maruca Kovac told CBS News. "He said it was too late."

Hawkins said he had been a burden to all his friends and family and didn't want to be one anymore. He thanked Kovac for everything her family had done for him and told her that he had left them a note.

"It said how much he loved his family and all his friends and how he was sorry he was a burden to everybody," she said. It also said that "his whole life he was a piece of shit and now he'll be famous."

While he was obviously depressed, Hawkins had shown no previous signs of violence, she added.

"He came to us like a little lost puppy. Scared and lonely. He wasn't a violent person," she said.

"He was always very sensitive and caring, always wanting to

know how everybody was doing."

Most of the people who were mowed down when Hawkins started shooting were believed to be store employees rather than shoppers, US media reported.

Renee Toney was working in the gift wrap area near where Hawkins began shooting. A supervisor shouted at people to go into the nearby stockroom and Toney and the others rushed to it.

"None of them made it out," Toney said. "I was up front, and everybody except me was shot. It's a blur. I don't even know how I got to the stockroom. I was the closest one to the stockroom. Within seconds, they were shot right behind me."

The Nebraska incident was the latest in a series of shootings in the United States, which is home to more than 200 million privately owned firearms for a population of just over 300 million, authorities say.

In February, an 18-year-old Bosnian refugee shot and killed five people in a Utah shopping mall before being gunned down by police.

There have also been a series of school shootings this year, the worst being the Virginia Tech massacre in April, when 32 people were killed by a student who went on a campus rampage. **AFP**

China halts 'Maling' exports

SHANGHAI, CHINA—One of China's best-known food processors halted luncheon meat exports Friday on reports of chemical contamination, while the government announced the closure of more than 1,000 slaughterhouses over poor sanitation.

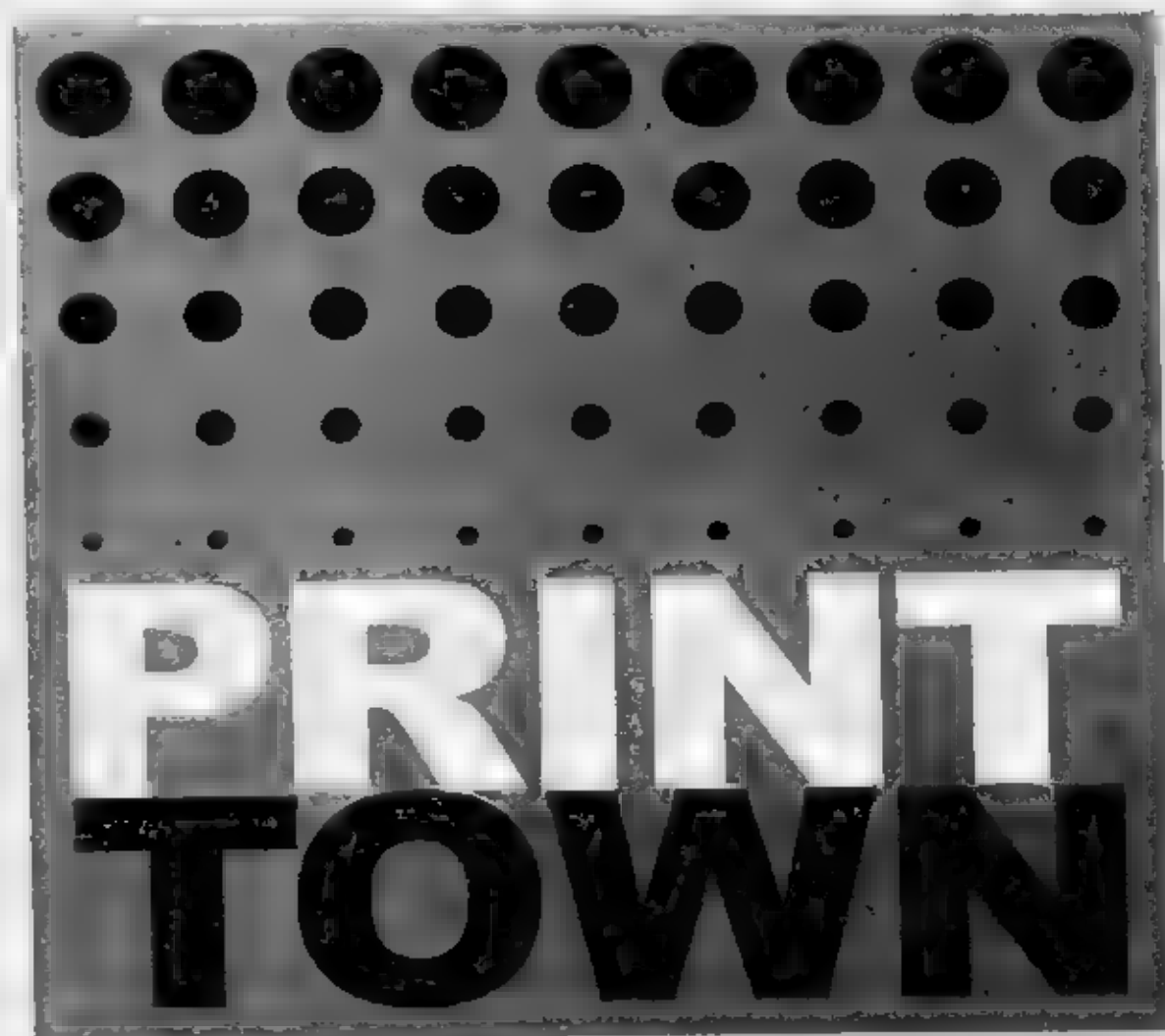
Those steps come amid a campaign to uncover potentially unsafe foods and other products. They came after Chinese exports of products such as pet food ingredients and toothpaste were found to be contaminated with dangerous chemicals this year.

In a statement, Shanghai-based Maling Food Co. said it had sent top executives to Hong Kong to help investigate allegations a shipment of its meat was contaminated with the antibiotic nitrofurans, which is thought to cause cancer.

The export suspension was extended to all of Maling's canned food products, which include meat, seafood, fruits and vegetables, the company said.

Begun more than 75 years ago, Maling is one of China's most famous brands and its luncheon meat is as well known to Chinese consumers as Spam is in the United States. **AP**

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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT(S) (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
ACCESS WORLDWIDE (AWWC) PHILIPPINES, INC. 18/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Janis Marks Valera American	Senior Manager
MMSPHIL MARITIME SERVICES, INC. Unit 102/203 Marbella II Bldg., 2071 Roxas Blvd., Marikina, Manila	Mikio Kutsuwada Japanese	Training Consultant
CONNECTIVITY FACTORS AND ACCESS, INC. Basement 1 Export Bank Plaza, Chino Rocas Ave. Makati City	Kyu Hwan Na Korean	Sales Asst. Manager
CONNECTIVITY FACTORS AND ACCESS, INC. Basement 1 Export Bank Plaza, Chino Rocas Ave. Makati City	Heungrae Jo Korean	Asst. Manager
CONNECTIVITY FACTORS AND ACCESS, INC. Basement 1 Export Bank Plaza, Chino Rocas Ave., Makati City	Hyukmin Kwon Korean	Asst. Supervisor
CONNECTIVITY FACTORS AND ACCESS, INC. Basement 1 Export Bank Plaza, Chino Rocas Ave. Makati City	Chul Ho Lee Korean	Manager
CONNECTIVITY FACTORS AND ACCESS, INC. Basement 1 Export Bank Plaza, Chino Rocas Ave., Makati City	Seakoo Kang Korean	Sales & Marketing Supervisor
JAMAALAKSHMI LENDING & TRADING CORP. U-112-3A Balagtas Villas, Balagtas St., Pasay City	Sukhdev Singh Indian	Assistant Manager
JAMAALAKSHMI LENDING & TRADING CORP. U-112-3A Balagtas Villas, Balagtas St., Pasay City	Amarjit Kaur Indian	Branch Manager
JAMAALAKSHMI LENDING & TRADING CORP. U-112-3A Balagtas Villas, Balagtas St., Pasay City	Sukhwinder Kaur Indian	Bookkeeper
JAMAALAKSHMI LENDING & TRADING CORP. U-112-3A Balagtas Villas, Balagtas St., Pasay City	Ramandeep Kaur Indian	Technical Supervisor
CLAULED TRADING LTD. CO. 927 Bernardo St., Binondo, Manila	Yingjie Xu Chinese	Supervisor
CLAULED TRADING LTD. CO. 927 Bernardo St., Binondo, Manila	Hailong Huang Chinese	Supervisor
CLAULED TRADING LTD. CO. 927 Bernardo St., Binondo, Manila	Xuhua Wu Chinese	Manager
WISEMEN TRAVEL & TOURS CONSULTANCY 1234 Bambang St. cor Jose Abad Santos Sts., Tondo, Manila	Zongji Jin Chinese	Assistant Tour Manager
WISEMEN TRAVEL & TOURS CONSULTANCY 1234 Bambang St. cor Jose Abad Santos Sts., Tondo, Manila	Pengfei Li Chinese	Tour Manager
WELS ACADEMY INC. J-202-203 The Taipei Place Bldg., Emerald Ave., Pasig City	James Hain Canadian	Tutor Training Consultant
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 14/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Ayala Ave., Makati City	Yann Prunier French	Foreign Language Risk Management Representative
WSP ASIA PHILIPPINES, INC. 30/F One San Miguel Bldg., San Miguel Ave., Pasig City	Michael Charles Pratt British	M & E Division Manager
ICT MARKETING SERVICES, INC. 9/F PBCOM Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Anthony Carl Clarke American	Vice President for Training and Development
CITIBANK N.A. Cibbank Center, 8741 Valero St. cor Villar St., Bel-Air Village, Makati City	Jane Valerie Hughes British	Sr. Vice President

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned applications please communicate with the Regional Director

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
R.O. Director

Filipinos roll under Thai juggernaut in athletics

Go's charges manage just 2 silvers, 3 bronzes on Day 1

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE FIRST BATCH OF FILIPINO BETS TO PLUNGE into action in athletics at the 24th Southeast Asian Games here managed just two silver and three bronze medals.

Rosie Villarito finished second—though by a mile—on Thailand's Buoban Panang in the women's javelin, while Mary Grace Milgar was runner-up to another Thai, Wassana Winatho, in the 400-meter hurdles as the hosts won five of the first nine finals of the competition which got going at His Majesty the King's 80th Birth Anniversary Stadium.

Panang made a heave of 55.97 meters that eclipsed her old SEA Games record of 55.06 which she set in the 2005 Games in Manila.

Milgar clocked 59.07 seconds in setting for second to Winatho, who won virtually unopposed in 57.21. The Filipina nipped Vietnam's Bguyen Thi Nu for the silver.

Athletics chief Go Teng Kok had earlier said his charges could win at least 10 gold medals here.

Elsezer Sunang was third in the men's shotput, also falling to a record-setting



24th SEA GAMES
6-15 DECEMBER 2007
NAKHON RATCHASIMA
THAILAND

Thai Sunang had a throw of 15.62 meters, way short of the 17.43 by Chatchawai Polyeng, who shattered Singaporean Dong Enxin's four-year mark of 17.28.

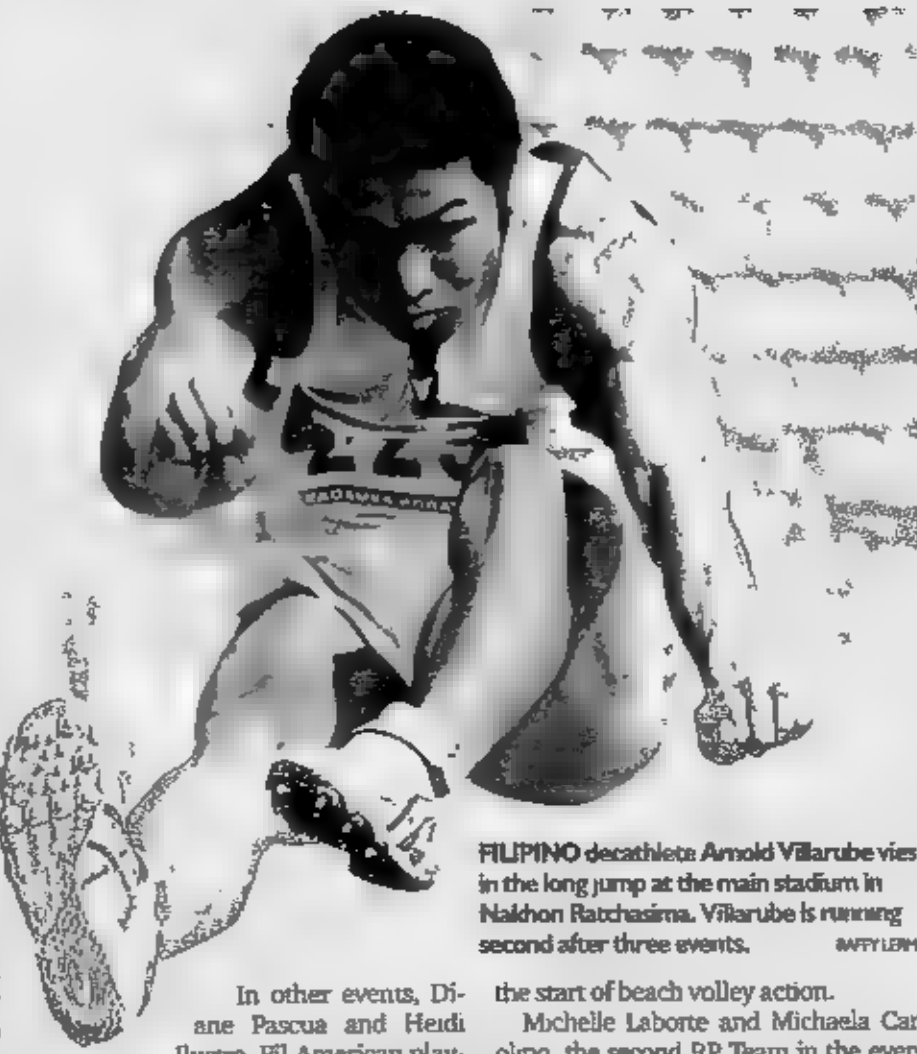
Julius Sermona ran out of steam in the 5,000m, losing to Boonthung Srisung in 14:24.72. The Thai won by almost six seconds after

peeling away from the main pack inside the final two laps.

Veteran Jobert Delicano owned the Filipinos' final bronze, going 16.07 meters on his third attempt, just 37 centimeters off the record 16.44 of Thai Theerayut Phikakong.

The Philippines failed to put a runner in the women's 100-meter finals with Sheena Atilano unable to finish her semifinal heat and Sharon Jizumundo bombing out in 12.46 seconds, the second worst time in the 11-strong field.

In comparison, Lydia de Vega-Mercado timed 11.28—the event's 20-year-old record—in winning the gold in 1987.



FILIPINO decathlete Arnold Villarube vies in the long jump at the main stadium in Nakhon Ratchasima. Villarube is running second after three events.

In other events, Diane Pascua and Heidi Ilustre, Fil-American players honed overseas with the Beijing Olympics as their final target, ripped their Malaysian foes, Teng Kee Luk and Isaw Ari Manokharan, 21-11, 21 11, at

the start of beach volleyball action.

Michelle Laborte and Michaela Carolino, the second RP Team in the event kept in step in the same overpowering manner after a 21-13, 21-13 demolition of Siamphay Senanong and Mina Lakhounheuang of Laos.

Agojo, Ardina no-show for lady golfers

By Musong R. Castillo

PAK THONG CHAI, THAILAND—THE PHILIPPINE women's golf team, to borrow a popular term, is terribly "under-clubbed."

Veteran internationalists Jayvie Agojo and Dottie Ardina failed to secure permissions from their respective schools in the United States, leaving the RP squad without its top two players for the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

Agojo, who won the individual silver at The Country Club in Sta. Rosa, Laguna in 2005, and Ardina, winner of a string of tournaments back home and abroad, were originally the spearheads of the squad that also includes Anya Tanpinco.

But Agojo, the 2004 RP Amateur champ, could



Ikeda, a 19-year-old who will get her baptism of fire in representing the Philippines at the Bonanza Golf and Country Club, about 120 kilometers from the main stadium in Nakhon Ratchasima.

Agojo teamed up with Fil-Aussie Frances Bondad

not get a reprieve from her studies at Pepperdine and Ardina from the Leadbetter Pendleton Academy in Florida, crippled the RP squad and its chances.

This development has left the NGAP no choice but to tap the relatively inexperienced Regina de Guzman and Shihuro

and Tanpinco for the team silver in 2005.

The 54-hole women's event will not open until Dec. 11 as men's action gets the event off the ground on Monday, with the RP squad seeking to defend the individual and team titles using a new crew culled from two leading stables back home.

Mark Fernando and Jonel Ababa, products of the ground-breaking National Caddies' Open, and ICT-SI products Anthony Fernando and Ferdinand Aunzo are the members of the men's squad that will be without RP ace Jay Bayron.

Bayron had asked permission from the NGAP to try his luck on the Asian Tour qualifying that runs smack with the schedule here.

Juvic Pagunsan won the 2005 Games' individual gold and powered his team that included Artemio Murakami to victory. Both have since turned pro.

Alcantara, Barte blast Thais, barge into semis; Zoleta falls

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINES' FRANCIS Casey Alcantara and Ralph Kevin Barte hurdled their respective foes yesterday to advance to the semifinals and make up for the crushing defeat of the country's remaining hope in the girls' division of the Phinma ITF junior tennis tournament at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The top-seeded Alcantara, a veteran internationalist, needed a tie-break in the first set to fire up his game and defeat Thailand's sixth seed Sorapon Imprapal, 7-6 (3), 6-

2, while Barte bundled out another Thai, seventh seed Phapinthon Pakpoomkano, 6-2, 6-4.

Their victories made up for the 6-2, 6-1 defeat Nikki Camille Zoleta suffered at the hands of Australian Ashling Sumner in the quarterfinals.

"I'm playing my best tennis now, I'm very confident of my chances," said Alcantara who is fresh off his victory in an ITF junior championship last month in Malaysia.

The world's No. 195 forged a semifinal showdown with compatriot and third seed Pablo Olivarez II, who outlasted Croatian eighth

seed Vedran Ljubicic, 6-0, 6-7 (5), 6-4.

Barte will next face off with Australian fifth seed James Duckworth, who disposed of Chinese Taipei's Chang Yu-chi, 6-2, 6-2.

In girls' play, Sumner arranged a final four duel with fellow Australian Cody Morris, who overcame Romania's Ioana Laura Alecsiu, 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.

Eighth-seeded Japanese Maho Kowase thrashed her compatriot Riko Fujioka, 6-1, 6-2, to advance against Australia's Hayley Ericksen, a 7-5, 6-3 winner over Thai top seed Sajakorn Mahajaroenkul.



BRAVE STAND: Nikki Camille Zoleta returns to Australian Ashling Sumner.

It's all over but the shouting for Club Marinduque at Fil-Am

By Jong Arcano
Inquirer Golf editor

BAGUIO—NEW RECRUIT PETER Villaber's brilliant relief job yesterday underscored the strength of Club Marinduque and it's all over but the shouting for the talent-laden squad in the 58th Fil-Am golf championship wars here.

Villaber came through with a two-under-par card worth 38 points in a surprise backup effort to spearhead Jay Bayron as Club Marinduque stormed ahead by 14 points in the Fil division and took a commanding 21-point margin in the Am category with Jessie Balasabas leading the attack.

The 20-year-old Villaber, another prized find from Davao and the newest

standout of the Calatagan stable of Tommy Manotoc, didn't look like a Fil-Am first timer with his five-birdie round at Camp John Hay, where greens went as fast as 14 in the Stimpmeter.

Bayron, bent on ending his amateur career with a victory here, produced 39 as the top scorer for Marinduque, and counting the 37 of Mario Labajo and 33 of Rufino Bayron, the three-time defending champions had their highest output in three days of 147 points to raise their total to 413 with only one round to go.

There were imminent signs of a Manila Southwoods rally with Mike Bibat rebounding from a no-count stint the previous day to shoot a tournament-best 40, Tonnon Asisio exploding with a 39 and Gene Bondoc contributing a 35.

But the 28 of Chun Il-jin and the ab-

sence of a fifth man due to the departure of national champion Tony Fernando for the SEA Games told heavily on the Southwoods comeback bid.

They finished with a 142 for the day. "We're in pretty good shape but we still cannot discount a Southwoods rally," said Marinduque captain Manotoc, who arrived yesterday from Manila.

Manotoc was happy with the prospect of his boys moving closer to their fourth version of a twin-kill at the expense of Southwoods.

A Southwoods rally, however, seems out of the question in the Am side, where Marinduque gained what it lost in yesterday's third round due to the late disqualification of Balasabas.

Balasabas' 36-point effort was wasted as well as his individual bid for a score-



CLUB Marinduque's Peter Villaber surveys the elevated green of hole No. 9 before making his second shot. The 38 points of Tommy Manotoc's newest find from Davao was second only to Mike Bibat's 40 for the day.

BONG MERCADO

card left unsigned by his marker.

Balasabas, however, put the incident behind him and delivered a 34 like Dave Hernandez, further bloating the Marinduque lead. Zanie Boy Guialon carded a 33 and Joseph Labajo had a 29 for Marinduque's 130 for the day that gave them a 54-hole total of 390.

Southwoods was at 369 with Junjun Planas's 33 as its best score.

Updated results of the Fil-Am sponsored by Mazda Phils, Club Car, Wilson, Royal Caribbean, El Nido Resorts, My Phone, can be viewed at pupinas-golf.com, the joint website of Inquirer Golf and Golf Digest Philippines.

RP squad rugby's 'surprise package'

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—TO ITS Southeast Asian Games rivals, the RP men's rugby squad remains a big question mark. Coach Roderick Hartley of Australia prefers to keep it that way.

"Every act, every move, every word we do in public has a purpose," said Hartley, a 55-year-old former varsity rugby standout from Sydney and now a marine engineering instructor.

"The less our foes think of us, the better. Now the other teams like Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand are ignoring the Philippines, believing we are not a threat. That's just fine."

This is the first time the Philippines is fielding a rugby team in the SEAG, and putting the squad together was a feat in itself, said Hartley, a 12-year Manila resident who is also the vice president of the Philippine Rugby Football Union.

"Once we knew that rugby would be in the Games, we started sending e-mails to everyone we knew overseas with Filipino roots who played the game. The response was great," added Hartley.

Coming from strong rugby nations, the players include Filipino-British actor-model Andrew Wolff, the Saunders brothers Oliver, Matthew and Benjamin, who hail from Wales, and Mike Letts, who competes in Australia.

Collectively called the "Sons of Lapu-Lapu," the team has also scored a first, even before its first game against Singapore this Sunday: All of its members chipped in to make the trip here.

"All of us paid our way here," Hartley said. "We met all the financial and other requirements to join the delegation."

Hartley thanked TCC Shipping, RTH Consultancy and Leighton contractors for helping sponsor the team.

But just how strong is this team in the Games?

"You and all the other teams will know by Sunday," Hartley winked.

Chef de Mission: Mission won't be accomplished

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE CHIEF HAS RAISED THE WHITE flag, too.

The Philippines' chef de mission to the 24th Southeast Asian Games, Rep. Monico Puentevela, yesterday echoed the sentiments of Philippine Olympic Committee that the Games overall championship slipped through the Filipinos' fingers on the day the Games began in Thailand.

"This is just being realistic," said Puentevela, also the POC first vice president. "I was hoping for a little miracle but miracles are also very expensive these days."

As of press time last night, Thailand had already amassed 19 gold medals with the RP contingent managing only one, through Joey Barba in mountain bike's downhill event (See banner story on A29), to be in sixth place.

"A decent second place will do," said Puentevela.

Thailand sports officials earlier made a forecast that didn't include the Philippines among the top three. It put Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore as Thailand's toughest contenders.

Unrest brewing among athletes

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THERE is a brewing unrest among Filipino athletes here. Their usual \$300 allowance for the SEA Games, regardless of how many days they're scheduled to compete, will now be changed to a \$30 a day.

This means that an athlete seeing action for two days will get only \$60, and so on, despite what officials said was an assurance from President Macapagal-Arroyo during their courtesy call recently that they will get their old allowance.

Sports commissioner Richie Garcia acknowledged this development Friday, saying the Philippine Sports Commission can't do anything because it has to follow the directive from the Commission on Audit.

"The PSC wanted to give them even more, but our hands are tied," Garcia said. "We understand their plight and are trying to restore their old allowance."

The 24th SEA Games is the biggest ever in terms of the number of sports, athletes and competition venues. More than 7,000 athletes are competing for 475 gold medals in 43 sports.

As host of the SEAG for the third time, Thailand has the biggest delegation with about 1,400 athletes and officials. **Ernesto A. Gonzales**



THE PHILIPPINE team's Fil-Am star Gabe Norwood tears the middle and scores in the game against Cambodia. **RAFFY LERMA**

RP cagers hold punches, still rout Cambodia

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—OVER-powering.

That was the way the famed Philippine team debuted Friday afternoon as the Filipinos broke away late in the first period and ripped Cambodia to shreds, 136-82, at the start of basketball action in the 24th Southeast Asian Games.

With as many foreign coaches scouting the team as there were Filipinos that cheered the team on, the Philippines still put on a clinical display despite hiding its true strengths.

"We held our plays back," coach Junel Baculi told scribes at the Keelaprom Stadium here. "All of our plays were basically designed just for this game. We did not want to give anything away to the coaches who were scouting us."

Gabe Norwood scored 11 points in the most electrifying ways and eight others scored in twin digits for Baculi as the Filipinos led by as many as 55 several times, the last on a short jumper by the 6-foot-5 point guard for 126-71 with 4:06 left.

The victory served notice of how well-prepared this squad is to returning as king of the region after the event was scrapped in Manila two years ago because of a squabble between the Philippine Olympic Committee and the then-governing Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Center Beau Belga led the Filipinos with 17

points and gunslinger Jonathan Fernandez added 16 as all 12 players who stepped on the floor scored at least three points.

The game was tight for a while, with the Cambodians managing to hold the score to 14-17.

But the Filipinos, who used varied defensive plays to confuse the Cambodians and the coaches who were scouting them, came up with runs one after the other to take a 70-26 lead at the break.

And the Philippines, which has lost only two games in a rich history in this event, refused to slow down as Norwood came up with some show-time slam dunks that eventually shoved the Filipinos to a 106-54 lead after three periods.

Meanwhile, confusion marred the start of the women's side after the schedule was revised for the nth time on Thursday night.

The Filipinos, aiming to win the gold for the first time, were supposed to slug it out with Singapore earlier only to learn that their game had been moved for Saturday at 3 p.m.

"It's all part of the homecourt edge that they (Thais) have," women's coach Fritz Gaston said. "It's their prerogative. They are wary of us because they have seen so many new faces in the lineup."

The scores: **PHILIPPINES** 136—Belga 17, Fernandez 16, Bautista 15, Salangsang 15, Vergara 13, Chan 12, Norwood 11, Alorzo 11, Castro 10, Cruz 8, Rodriguez 5, Tan 3. **CAMBODIA** 82—Sopon 32, Mohn 25, Taling 8, Ung 7, So 4, Kim 4, Phang 2, Jim 0, Kim 0, Eng 0. **Quarters:** 33-16, 70-26, 106-54, 136-82.

Pugs in 3-1 start as Semillano, Castro pull thru

By Recah Trinidad

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—SYDNEY Olympian Larry Semillano led a fiery 3-1 charge into the semifinals by the Philippines by dusting off Vietnam's Quang Duc Dia in the first day of boxing competitions at the Mueangpug Municipal Gymnasium Friday.

Flyweight Godfrey Castro scored a stoppage over Laotian Xayapone Chandasone after Annalisa Cruz swamped Min Zaw Myo of Myanmar, 28-12, in the women's light bantamweight quarterfinals for a strong start that was muted by the lone defeat suffered by Josie Gabunco against Yen

Yu Tin Hai of Vietnam, 6-9, in the 46 kg class.

The 31-year-old Semillano, lone RP boxing gold medalist in the 1997 Southeast Asian Games in Jakarta, opened up cautiously before pouring it on in the second round and pulling away in the closing round, 27-7, to the cheers of an appreciative young crowd.

The RP team parades five more fighters in both the men's and women's divisions in the quarterfinals today for the country's defense of the boxing championship won in Bacolod

City in 2005.

"So far so good, even if we dropped one bout," said Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez.

Lopez said Gabunco could have submitted a better result had she not been rushed into the ring, without the benefit of a

warm-up.

Although the Philippines failed to field its finest simonpures here, experts predict another confrontation between the Thai and Filipino fighters for the boxing championship.

In fact, Castro, after his sensational second-round dumping of his Laotian foe, promptly arranged a semifinal confrontation with the legendary Thai flyweight Somjit Jongjohor, who toyed with Indon Bonyk Yusak Saweho, 24-4.

The RP team, which won a total of eight gold medals—four each by the men and women—to grab the boxing crown from Thailand two years ago, has pulled out its top bets, including Beijing Olympic qualifier Harry Tanamor, from competitions here.

That could be equal to surrendering the crown ahead of actual competitions, but the fate of the RP boxing campaign won't be determined until the finals cast has been completed.



GODFREY Castro: Easy victory

Merciless Mamiit sparks RP netters

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—FLAM-boyant Cecil Mamiit triumphed with workmanlike efficiency while Eric Tano more than broke up a sweat to push the Philippines to the semifinals of the team tennis event of the 24th SEA Games.

Mamiit, the defending individual champion, was merciless in a 6-0, 6-0 whitewash of Tola Thun, while Tano had to bounce back from a second set loss before winning, 7-6 (3), 6-7 (4), 6-1, over Nysan Tan that propelled the Filipinos to a sweep of Cambodia.

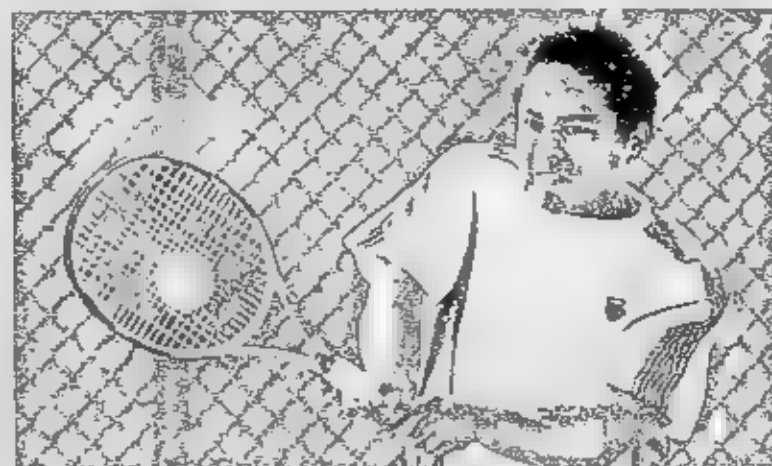
Patrick John Tierro and Johnny

Arcilla then fashioned out a 6-1, 6-1 win over Thun and Sambat Orm in the no-bearing doubles.

That put the third-seeded RP squad into the Final Four opposite top-ranked Thailand, which got similar lopsided victories from Sonchat Ratiwatana and Weerapat Doakmaikli in the singles opposite Malaysian foes.

Ratiwatana tore Kanagaraj Balakrishnan apart, 6-1, 6-1, while Doakmaikli scored a 6-2, 6-2 victory over YM Si.

It was actually a day of short work for some of the fancied bets in this event, with Mamiit, who was cheered on by his mother and



CECIL Mamiit hits a forehand against Nysan Tan of Cambodia whom he whitewashed, 6-0, 6-0. **RAFFY LERMA**

about at court-side, needing just 33 minutes to pound out the win.

Ratiwatana, on the other hand, was on the court for only 38 minutes.

The 32-year-old Tano, meanwhile, shook off some sluggishness and got himself into form just

in time, winning in two hours and 16 minutes against a foe highly regarded at the start.

Vietnam and Indonesia were in the other semifinal pairing after plastering Laos and Myanmar, respectively, with sweep victories as well.

RP tankers make waves, strike golds

From page A25

they can go all the way to the top this time.

Three of the four boxers easily hurdled their opening matches—women's light bantamweight Annalisa Cruz, men's flyweight Godfrey Castro and the veteran Larry Semillano in the light welter class.

Semona was second in 14:24.72 in the men's 5,000 meters, Milgar clocked 59.07 in the women's 400-meter hurdles and Villarito cleared 50.49 meters in the women's javelin.

Quinones, the men's cross country champion in Vietnam in 2003, could do no better than a second straight silver with a time of 2 hours 01:58 with compatriot Niño Surban salvaging the bronze in 2:03:10. Frederick Feliciano, the other RP entry, was 11th in 2:18:23.

Bitbit could only finish third in 2:00:1 as she miserably failed to come up with a great follow-up to Joey Barba's nifty victory in the men's downhill run Thursday.

The other bronze medalists were wrestlers Maria Cristina Vergara (women's free 51kg), and Maribel Jambora (women's free 48kg), Jobert Delicano in triple jump, and Eliezer Sonong in the men's shot put.

The Filipinos produced some outstanding results in the ball games but they were mostly because their opponents were still neophytes in their sport.

Now a whipping squad in Asia but a colossus in the region, the RP baseball team showed no mercy in a 31-0, five-inning romp over Malaysia to launch its campaign for a second straight title.

The country's netters also proved unforgiving with 3-0 wins against separate Cambodian foes at the start of team play.

After Eric Tano struggled with a 6-7, 7-6, 6-1 win over N. Tan, Cecil Mamut shut out T. Thun before Johnny Arcilla and PJ Tierro routed Thun and S. Orm, 6-1, 6-1.

Their female counterparts were even more impressive, yielding only a point in three matches. Czarina Mae Arevalo gave up the lone point to the enemy in between victories at love by Diane Matias in the other singles and Diane's doubles partnership with Denise Dy.

But the Filipinos lost twice to Malaysia in futsal, bowing 8-4 in the men's division and 3-2 in the women's bracket.

Janice Hung remained in contention for a medal after the first of two events in wushu's taiquan by placing third with 9.41 points, but teammate Stephanie Agbay seems out of the running as she stood third with 9.32.

Earlier, Pedro Quina and Daniel Parantac wound up sixth in a field of seven in the men's duilian with 9.42.

The outclassed Filipinos in athletics for the day were Albert Salcedo, Sharon Jizmundo, Sheena Arilano and Benigno Marayag.

Salcedo failed to reach the finals of the men's 100 meters, clocking 10.80 to place sixth in the first semifinal heat while Jizmundo timed 12.47 to rank 10th in the women's 100 after the heats.

Marayag fouled all his first three attempts in the triple jump while Arilano was a DNF (did not finish) in her heat in the women's 100.

Quiñones bags silver in cross-country race

By Musong R. Castillo

KHAO YAI THIENG—VETERAN Eusebio Quiñones and Nino Surban finished 2-3 behind a Thai at the end of the mountain cycling competition of the 24th Southeast Asian Games at the Khao Yai Thieng course here.

The 34-year-old Quiñones, a veteran of several Tour Philippines bikathons and the gold medalist in this event in 2001, clocked 2 hours, 1 minute and 58 seconds for the 41-kilometer cross-country course, finishing a full 2:30 behind Tawatchai Masae.

Surban bagged the bronze after checking in 1:12 behind Quiñones and 3:42 after the Thai star, who won the first cycling title for the hosts after their downhill rider was upended by Joey Barba on Thursday.

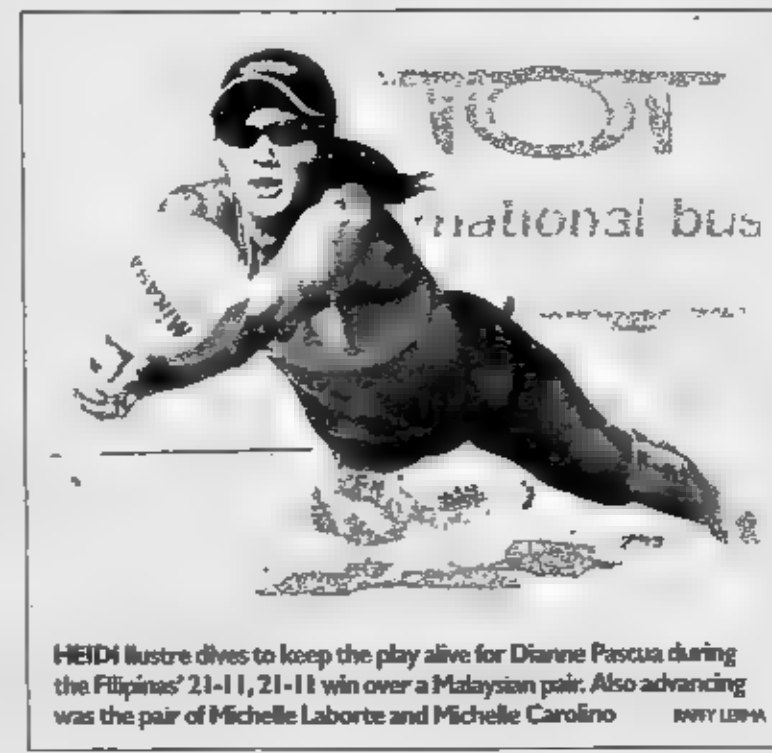
"Tough luck," Quiñones, who

also won the bronze in Vietnam, said in Filipino. "I thought I had a real shot at the gold medal, but the Thai knew the course and it worked to his advantage. But a silver medal is not bad."

Maritess Bitbit equaled Surban's feat in the distaff side, checking in 3:54 behind gold medalist Thi Thanh Huyen Nguyen and Thanh Dam Nguyen, both of Vietnam.

Thi Thanh timed 1:56:17 for the 32.8 km course, which was so tough that it claimed the chances of the home bet, Jindarat Pornbanchodkul, who took a nasty spill halfway through the run and failed to finish.

Frederick Feliciano, the brightest hope for the Philippines in the event, wound up in 11th place, nearly 19 minutes behind Masae.



HEIDI Ilustre dives to keep the play alive for Dianne Pascua during the Filipinas' 21-11, 21-11 win over a Malaysian pair. Also advancing was the pair of Michelle Laborte and Michelle Carolino. **RAFFY LERMA**

Mayweather favored vs Hatton

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—RICKY HATTON is confident he will bring home the greatest victory in British boxing history by dethroning Floyd Mayweather here Saturday in an iconic showdown of unbeaten welterweights.

The self-deprecating 29-year-old Englishman has joked about getting heavy between fights and downing a few pints at Manchester pubs with his friends, but his manner is serious when it comes to winning and what it would mean.

"It will be the biggest win in British boxing history," he said. "It would

mean everything. To be the best fighter in the world in any weight division, it would be massive.

"I believe I'm going to do it. There's not a doubt in my mind. I've spent a lifetime of my career being respectful and not having a bad word to say, but in my eyes this fight is already over.

"I think Floyd is going to get the shock of his life."

Mayweather, 38-0 with 24 knockouts, defends his World Boxing Council crown against Hatton, 43-0 with 31 knockouts, in a matchup that has brought thousands from Britain to the

neon-glowing Las Vegas Strip.

Many experts give the hard-charging Hatton little chance against Mayweather and his matchless athleticism.

Mayweather, boxing's unbeaten pound-for-pound king, certainly didn't seem distracted during his stop at the casino on Thursday, calmly proclaiming his superiority and insisting his brittle hands won't hurt his punching power.

"I'm never going to overlook a guy or come into the ring in the wrong shape," Mayweather said. "He's the one who shouldn't sleep at night." **AP**



WBC welterweight champion Floyd Mayweather Jr. (left) and Ricky Hatton face off after a news conference held at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas last Wednesday. **AP**

Iverson scoring blitz lifts Nuggets over Mavericks



ALLEN Iverson of the Denver Nuggets drives past Dallas Mavericks defenders. He finished with 35 points.

DALLAS—ALLEN IVERSON SCORED 35 points a day after putting up 51, and this time it was enough to lead the Denver Nuggets to victory against the Dallas Mavericks, 122-109, in the NBA on Thursday.

Iverson's 51 was against the Los Angeles Lakers, and it came in defeat. This time, he mixed in 12 assists for the Nuggets.

Linas Kleiza benefitted from Iverson's passing, scoring a season-best 23. Carmelo Anthony had 23 points and Marcus Camby added 14 rebounds and eight points.

Dirk Nowitzki tied his season high with 32 points and had 12 rebounds for Dallas, and Jerry Stackhouse scored a season-high 23 points. The Mavericks lost their second straight, third in four games and sixth in the last nine.

Dallas gave up its most points this season in a quarter (39, the first), a half (64) and a game.

Hawks 90, Timberwolves 89

At Atlanta, Joe Johnson's 18-footer at the buzzer helped Atlanta avoid an embarrassing defeat.

Minnesota, which lost its fifth straight to drop to a league-worst 2-15, had a one-point lead after Marko Jarić's layin with 2.2 seconds left.

However, after an Atlanta timeout, Johnson took the inbound pass at the top of the key and dribbled to his right past Timberwolves guard Sebastian Telfair and pulled up to shoot over Michael Doleac's outstretched arms.

Josh Smith had 28 points and seven blocked shots to lead Atlanta. Johnson added 21 points, and Marvin Williams finished with 20.

Craig Smith scored 20 points to lead the Timberwolves. Rookie Corey Brewer had 18 rebounds—two more than Al Jefferson's previous season high in a loss to Atlanta on Nov. 24. Despite having their reserves outscore Atlanta's by 46 points, the Timberwolves lost for the 22nd time in 24 games overall since winning at New York last April 6.

Blazers 112, Heat 106

Roy scored 25 points, Travis Outlaw had 20 and the Portland Trail Blazers beat Miami, handing the Heat their fourth straight loss.

Roy, who had 26 points against Memphis on Monday, picked up the Blazers in the second half as they appeared to be wanting. He kept driving to the hoop, drawing fouls and hitting 11 of 13 free throws.

Less than a week ago, Roy was in a 12-of-53 shooting slump, and what he called the "lowest point of the season." A visit with coach Nate McMillan changed his mind-set.

"He said quit thinking so much, he said go out there and be aggressive," Roy said. "That's what I did tonight."

LaMarcus Aldridge added 14 points and 10 rebounds and reserve James Jones scored all of his 14 points in the first half for Portland, which lost the previous five meetings against Miami.

"Travis stepped up, LaMarcus played big and James Jones gave us a lift off the bench," Roy said.

Dwyane Wade had 21 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists for the Heat, but shot 9-for-26 from the field. **AP**

Kidd: Migraine, not contract issue

EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY—Jason Kidd denied reports that he staged a protest by calling in sick and skipping the New Jersey Nets' National Basketball Association game Wednesday against the New York Knicks.

Nets coach Lawrence Frank said Kidd told him he could not play because of migraine headaches but un-

amed sources told several publications the move was a protest over a rejected contract extension.

Kidd, however, spoke to WFAN radio and said, "I did have a migraine" and while admitting there had been contract talks said they were not involved in his absence.

"I would never disrespect the game

by not playing because the game has been so good to me," Kidd said.

Kidd, 34, had hoped for a \$15-million deal but the star point guard, sources told the Bergen Record newspaper, would welcome a trade to Dallas, the Los Angeles Lakers or Cleveland Cavaliers, where his pal LeBron James plays. **AP**

Team Asia ahead as Sorenstam loses

PERTH, AUSTRALIA—TEAM ASIA HAD one hand on the Lexus Cup after an unpeccable start to the season-ending LPGA teams tournament here Friday.

Se Ri Pak's Asians were well on track to defend the title they won in Singapore last year, taking every point available on the first day's play at the Vines Resort and Country Club.

At the end of a first round of foursome matches, which saw International captain Annika Sorenstam beaten for the first time in the three-year history of the event, Asia led, 6-0.

When Korea's Candie Kung dropped a short birdie putt on the 16th hole to

clinch victory for her and Japan's Ayako Uehara over Sweden's Sorenstam and Scotland's Catriona Matthew, it completed Asia's clean sweep of the day.

Team Asia only needs six and a half points from the remaining 18 available to clinch the tournament.

The only downside for Asia was a recurrence of a left shoulder injury for captain Se Ri Pak, who managed to team with fellow Korean In-Kyung Kim to beat Americans Morgan Pressel and Stacy Prammasudh 2 and 1.

Sorenstam is confident though that they would bounce back.



ASIA captain Se Ri-pak tees off from the 3rd hole.

REUTERS

"I don't really know what to say, I thought we had a good team out there and some great pairings," she said. "We have to come back very strong and we know we can do it."

American vice captain Natalie Gulbis and Norway's Suzann Pettersen were first on the course and started strongly against Korean pair Jee Young Lee and Seon Hwa Lee, going two up after six holes despite Jee Young producing the shot of the day to sink a long approach shot on the second.

However, the pair then fell away as they struggled with wayward driving and poor putting. **AP**

Big crowd seen during Bonds trial

SAN FRANCISCO—THE PHILLIP BURTON Federal Building here has hosted its share of high-profile trials over the years. But they may all pale in comparison to the spectacle of the Barry Bonds perjury case.

More than 200 journalists and members of the public are expected to crowd the courtroom and a second overflow room on Friday for a brief hearing that marks the US home run king's first public appearance since he was indicted on Nov. 15 on four counts of perjury and one of obstruction of justice. The charges could mean prison time if Bonds, cut by the San Francisco Giants this year after 16 seasons, is convicted.

In an attempt to corral the horde, the court will bring the judges to Bonds rather than requiring him to appear in two courtrooms, as is often the case with routine initial appearances by defendants. Bonds also will be fingerprinted and have his mugshot taken. The affair is expected to last less than an hour.

"It's going to be very quick," said Golden Gate University law professor Peter Keane. "He'll have the charges read to him and likely enter a plea." **AP**

NFL: Patriots eye 16-0 mark

FOXBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS—The last best chance to keep the New England Patriots from going 16-0 in the NFL comes this Sunday.

If the Pittsburgh Steelers can't spoil New England's perfect regular season, chances are no one can.

"They're the best in the NFL, they're undefeated, so we're a little more pumped up," Steelers linebacker Larry Foote said.

The Patriots are 12-0 and lead in scoring but struggled in winning their last two games by three points each in the final minutes against teams with losing marks. The Steelers, 9-3, have allowed the fewest points and yards in the NFL. **AP**

Guilty Renault escapes sanctions

MONTE CARLO, MONACO—RENAULT WAS NOT PENALIZED Thursday despite being found guilty of having confidential information about Formula One rival McLaren.

Renault could have been handed a penalty similar to the \$100-million fine imposed on McLaren in September for using confidential data from Ferrari.

In the latest allegations in F1's spy scandal, team officials were summoned by the World Motor Sport Council to face accusations that Renault had unauthorized access to details on McLaren's cars.

In a statement on its website, the sport's governing body said it "found Renault F1 to be in breach of article 151c of the International Sporting Code but imposed no penalty."

Renault team boss Flavio Briatore welcomed the decision.

"I wish to pay tribute to the team, which has handled the matter with integrity and dignity. We are pleased that we can now focus fully on our preparations for the 2008 championship," Briatore said in a statement.

McLaren had claimed that Renault gained an unfair advantage last season from information about its fueling system, gear assembly, oil cooling system, hydraulic control system and suspension component.

Phil Mackereth, a former McLaren engineer, was alleged to have taken several CDs of data with him to Renault after he joined the team in September 2006.

The decision could mean Fernando Alonso's return to Renault after quitting McLaren in the offseason. The Spanish driver won the F1 world title with Renault in 2005-06. **AP**

Pagunsan grabs share of Volvo Masters lead



PAGUNSAN: Confidence is soaring.

BANGKOK—ON-FIRE JUVIC PAGUNSAN of the Philippines charged into the joint halfway lead with Australian Scott Hend at the season-ending Volvo Masters of Asia on Friday.

The sweet-swinging Pagunsan, whose confidence skyrocketed after claiming a breakthrough victory in Indonesia in October, fired a near flawless seven-under-par 65 while Hend enjoyed a welcome return to form with a 67.

The duo lead the \$750,000 Asian Tour finale with a two-day total of nine-under-par 135, with New Zealander Mark Brown and overnight leader Scott Strange of Australia lying in third place a stroke back after a 66 and 71 respectively.

Frankie Muñoz, who started the day a stroke off the lead, fumbled with a 76 that left him eight shots down.

Thailand's Chaphai Nirat, who needs to win the Volvo Masters of Asia to have a chance of lifting the prestigious UBS Order of Merit crown ahead of leader Liang Wen-chong of China, gave himself a chance with a 69 and is five off the lead going into the weekend.

Liang, the long-time Merit leader, shot a 71

for a share of 27th place on 143.

Pagunsan wielded a hot putter at Thai Country Club, needing only 22 putts en route to eight birdies. His lone blemish came at the closing 18th hole when he missed the green.

"I hit it really good today and drove it well but I think the key was also my putting which was really good," said Pagunsan, last season's Rookie of the Year.

"After winning in the Pertamina Indonesia President Invitation, my confidence is really high. It was a big help in my career. I trust myself and I will try to play well again for the next two days here."

A 15-foot birdie conversion on the opening hole set the 29-year-old Filipino on his way and he turned in 32 with three more birdies.

Leading second round scores

135—Juvic Pagunsan (PHI) 70-65, Scott Hend (AUS) 68-67; 138—Mark Brown (NZL) 70-68, Scott Strange (AUS) 65-71, 137—Prom Messawat (THA) 70-67; 138—Gavin Flint (AUS) 70-68, Chris Rodgers (ENG) 70-68, Gerald Rosales (PHI) 70-68, Angela Que (PHI) 70-68, Simon Yates (SCO) 69-69, Lee Sung (KOR) 68-70, Prayad Marksaeng (THA) 67-71, 139—Thongchai Jaidee (THA) 70-69, Simon Griffiths (ENG) 68-71, 140—Tetsuro Kiyota (JPN) 72-68, Chaphai Nirat (THA) 71-68, Chinarat Phadungsil (THA) 70-70; 141—Adam Blyth (AUS) 72-69, Thaworn Wiratchant (THA) 71-70, Lu Wei-chih (TPE) 71-70, Thammamon Sritot (THA) 69-72; 142—Lin Wen-tang (TPE) 72-70, Adam Brown (AUS) 72-70, Shiv Kapur (IND) 70-72, SSP Chowrasia (IND) 69-73, Tony Lescotte (PHI) 69-73

He also took advantage of all the par fives, birdieing each of them.

"I made quite a few putts from outside six feet. I feel I can win when I play in any tournament now. I'll try my best to win on Sunday," said Pagunsan.

Hend, fourth on the UBS Order of Merit, was delighted to be in the hunt after enduring a frustrating last few months. The big-hitting Australian started his rookie season in Asia on a strong note, posting three top-three finishes before suffering a dip in form.

Like Pagunsan, he also turned in 32 but stumbled on the 15th by sending a shot into a watery grave but he bounced back with two closing birdies to tie for the lead. "It was a good round of golf and it could have been better," Asian Tour News

SPORTSWATCH

Best hoops hits Rizal

THE BEST CENTER, THE COUNTRY'S PIONEER basketball school, goes to Taytay and Cardona in Rizal province for six days starting today.

Level 1 classes for boys and girls 9 years old and above will be held at the Harris Memorial gym in Taytay today and on Dec. 9, 15, 16, 21 and 22 and at the Cardona Municipal gym from Dec. 10 to 15 both from 8 a.m. to 12 noon.

Registration centers in the cage classes organized by coach Binky Bacay are at Mocha Blenda, Valley Fair, Taytay from 3 to 7 p.m. and the Cardona Municipal gym from 1 to 5 p.m. (or call 0922-6863660).

Those interested to join the Cardona event may also contact Badet Hermoso at 0910-6966920.

UGBA semis kicks off

THE 632-ENTRY UGBA HERITAGE CUP National 9-stag derby semifinal round resumes today at San Juan Coliseum, with more than 100 fights on tap.

"Only three participants have six wins each so far, so it's still anybody's race for the title," said Rene Diaz, president of United Gamecock Breeders Associations (UGBA).

UGBA is comprised of 18 gamecock breeders organizations all over the country. Charlie Yu and Jimmy Canda from Saipukan Breeders Group of Davao and Nestor Vendevil of Gamecock Breeders Association of Nueva Ecija lead the P10-million stagfest with six wins each.

Two days of championship battles will be staged on Dec. 11 and 13 at the Araneta Coliseum.

Roligon derby up

WITH MORE THAN 100 CHAMPIONSHIP fights on tap, the P2-million Wedder Wedder Lang 5-cock derby of Roligon Mega Cockpit starts early at 11 a.m. today.

A guaranteed prize of P2 million awaits the winners.

Hosts Rolly Ligon and Super Ninja group said the fastest win champion will receive P150,000 while the second placer gets P50,000.

Palace accepts Montemayor resignation

By Marc Anthony Reyes

COMMISSIONER LEON MONTEMAYOR of the Philippine Sports Commission yesterday announced he was stepping down after President Macapagal-Arroyo accepted the courtesy resignation he and the government sports agency's other officials ten-

dered early this year.

In a written statement, Montemayor said he will leave the PSC with "mixed emotions" after serving for six years.

His last task was to prepare the PSC secretariat in the 24th Southeast Asian Games in Thailand and to ensure that the RP athletes' needs in the

biennial meet are taken care of.

Though a replacement has not been named, Montemayor's departure from the PSC has again triggered speculations that a revamp at the agency is forthcoming.

A letter, dated Nov. 29, accepting Montemayor's courtesy resignation was sent to PSC chair William "Butch"

Ramirez just before the latter flew to Thailand.

"Satisfaction is my foremost feeling, and happiness that I was given the opportunity to help the country's cause, its relentless search for sporting excellence," he said in his letter. "For this I express my gratitude to President Arroyo."

If you 'build' at home first, the stars will come—says Blatter

By Marc Anthony Reyes



PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE your local talent is.

That is where the International Football Federation's (Fifa) subsidy will be most useful, the body's president, Joseph Blatter, told local sports officials yesterday.

Blatter, who arrived in the country for the Philippine Football Federation's 100th anniversary, yesterday said inviting star-rich teams like Manchester United and Real Madrid would be waste of money at the moment.

Blatter, in effect, dissuaded the local football officials from taking the path volleyball took. The local volleyball association reeled in the world's biggest stars into the country, triggering a growth of the

sport hereabouts.

Badminton also does the same, bringing in the world's best to showcase their skills here.

With Fifa allotting \$1 million to the PFF every four years, questions cropped up as to whether the local association can also do the same.

But Blatter said inviting the world's best players could lead to overlooking the sport's growth in the country.

"You build up your national team first so good teams will come over," said Blatter in a press conference at the Hotel Sofitel. "Then you can get sponsors to spend for the team you like."

Countries like Malaysia and Thailand spend millions of dollars to bring European and Spanish powerhouse clubs to their countries to play against their national squads. But such a move won't be as cost-effective for the country, whose national team could not even send a squad to the Southeast Asian Games and where the sport's popularity is dwarfed by that of basketball.

BLATTER: \$1 million for RP PFFUSOM try, triggering a growth of the

'Pinoys can excel in mixed martial arts'

AN INTRODUCTION TO MIXED MARTIAL arts and a more thorough knowledge about it are what the sport needs to make it big in the Philippines.

According to Benny Tuazon Jr., president of the Fearless Fighting Productions that is staging the "Ring of Fire: World Team Challenge" tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum, Filipinos can be very good mixed martial artists.

Tuazon said the sport is a global phenomenon because people from all walks of life can relate to it.

"It knows no color and race," said Tuazon. "It is a lifestyle. The discipline, training and mental toughness needed in the sport can be used in our daily lives."

He added that like boxing, one doesn't need to be big to excel in MMA.

Tuazon also wants to organize an MMA association to develop talents from all over the country.

Four teams of five athletes each will show their wares in tomorrow's event—the teams of Ken Shamrock, Royce Gracie, Josh Barnett and Gokor Chivichyan. Romina S. Austria

San Beda Alabang, Ateneo 3-peat FBL champs

SAN BEDA COLLEGE-ALABANG AND Ateneo de Manila emerged the biggest winners in last Sunday's finals of the Futures Basketball League at the Jacinto Thu courts of Xavier gym in San Juan.

Ateneo posted an easy 55-41 victory over Sta. Clara for its third straight championship in the boys' mini division with 9-year-old Jolo Mendoza, son of former UP-standout Jigs Mendoza, emerging as MVP.

In the boys' midjets game, San Beda College-Alabang edged La Salle-Grain Hills, 94-93, in overtime with San Beda

making the winning shot in the last four seconds of the overtime period. La Salle forced an extension with 14 seconds left in regulation play.

San Beda College-Alabang, which also bagged its third title in as many years, was led by two MVPs, Francis Abanar in the 13-year-old category and Alvin Morante in the 12-year-old group. Ezequiel Soyangco, the 11-year-old MVP, led La Salle's losing cause.

In other title duels, UST-A beat UST-B, 62-52, to win the boys' juniors crown with MVPs Joseph Luna and Cedric Labang-isa leading their team's charge.



MEMBERS and supporters of San Beda Alabang celebrate after beating La Salle Greenhills for the Futures Basketball League boys' midjet division crown.

400 joining Southwoods golf

AT LEAST 400 MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE seeing action in the Chairman's Cup 2007 golf tournament of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club on Dec. 14 and 15 in Carmuna, Cavite.

A Mitsubishi Lancer GLX, travel packages to top destinations and a lot more are at stake in the 36-hole tournament.

The Mitsubishi car from Diamond Motors will be staked as a hole-in-one prize. If no one

scores an ace, it will be raffled off for the members during the awards rites on Dec. 15.

The same arrangement applies for the other valuable prizes, including an SYM Motorbike Bonus 100, the Coca-Cola Golf Holiday Package for two to Mission Hills, China; the El Nido Resort vacation package, an Asian Cruise for two from Royal Caribbean International, an Alaskan Cruise for two and Korean Airlines business-class tickets for two to Vancouver.

West team wins FIBL All Star tiff

REIGNING ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AND Most Valuable Player Manoj Chandmal recovered from a first quarter slump and scored 22 points to lead the West All-Stars to a 78-72 victory over the East All-Stars in the FIBL All-Star Games last Sunday at the Adidas Sports Camp at The Fort.

Chandmal, scoreless in the early moments of the game, exploded for 10 points in the second quarter for the West as they came back from an early 13-point deficit.

The West All-Stars capitalized on their East counterparts' collapses late in the game with a 7-6 blast that turned the game around.

Prateek Chandnani added 14 points for the West, Rajesh Chulani chipped in 13 points while Sanjeev Gangwani had four blocks for the West.

Ace Knight Mukesh Mohanani led the way for the East with 17 points.

King Shark Ravi Gurnamal struggled with nine points.

The event was organized by FIBL commissioner Dilip Budhrani in celebration of Diwali, the Indian New Year

ENVOY CUP:
(From left) British Ambassador Peter Beckingham and former President Fidel Ramos join overall champion Louie Garcia and British Alumni Association chair Roberto de Ocampo during the trophy presentation of the UK Ambassador's Cup.



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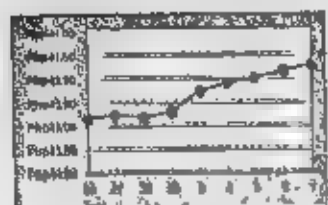
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Local consumer confidence weakens

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



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As of 5 p.m., Dec. 7, 2007

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 0.3% higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.3-PERCENT HIGHER YESTERDAY, buoyed by the upturn on Wall Street overnight as fears of an economic slowdown in the United States eased, dealers said.

The composite index finished up 11.43 points at 3,745.39 off a high of 3,772.48. Volume amounted to 1.8 billion shares worth P4.8 billion.

However, decliners outnumbered gainers 80 to 53, while 53 stocks were unchanged. The broader all-share index gained 8.82 points to 2,273.53.

The US market was lifted by US President George W. Bush's rescue plan for subprime home loan borrowers and amid continued expectations that the US Federal Reserve will lower interest rates by at least 25 basis points next week.

"That's one positive step to sooth investor fears about the subprime mortgage crisis," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities. "That's one less worry for investors."

Banks and property developers paced gains, with Metrobank up P2 at P62.50. Bank of the Philippine Islands rose P1 to P65.

Property developer Megaworld advanced 10 centavos to P4.35. Some stocks succumbed to profit-taking, which was not unexpected given the market's seven-day advance, said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

"It's a natural tendency to be cautious ahead of the weekend," he said. Market leader PLDT retreated P5 to P3,120, giving up early gains. Meraico was down P1.50 at P87, snapping a six-day rise.

AFF

By Doris C. Dumlaog

LOCAL CONSUMER CONFIDENCE WEAKENED IN the fourth quarter as barangay election jitters as well as security threats arising from the Glorietta mall explosion overwhelmed the optimism brought by robust economic growth, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' latest household survey.

The overall consumer confidence index in the fourth quarter declined by 10 index points to -33.6 percent from the index a quarter ago, largely driven by pessimism among households outside Metro Manila. The latest consumer expectations survey was conducted by the BSP for the whole month of October.

"Consumers' apprehensions may have partly reflected the concerns regarding uncertainty

on the orderly conduct and outcome of the barangay election, political noises and threats of terrorism during the survey period," BSP officer-in-charge Diwa Guinigundo said in a briefing yesterday.

The confidence index is the difference between the percentage of respondents with a positive view and those with a negative view. A negative index thus indicates that pessimists out-

number the optimists.

Since a large proportion of household respondents belonged to the lower income group (59.1 percent), Guinigundo said their pessimistic outlook pulled the overall consumer confidence index downward.

"There are more people saying that the outlook seems less bright compared to earlier responses. This is their perception for the outlook on economic and family conditions. But if you look at their buying conditions, most of these are positive, which means that their intention to buy or spend their money, which is the one we're focusing on, they're all positive," Guinigundo explained.

The buying condition index for the next three months fell

below 50 percent but was still positive at 46.8 percent (from 53.6 percent a quarter ago). The number of consumers with buying intentions 12 months ahead also slightly declined by 1.1 index points but was still positive at 20.3 percent. On the other hand, the buying index for consumer durables such as home appliances increased to 33.2 percent in this quarter's survey from a quarter ago.

Guinigundo said the favorable buying intention index, notwithstanding a bearish overall consumer index, was also partly due to the fact that demand for basic goods and services like food, education and medicine would not decline even if their prices went up.

"The survey was done in October,"

LOCAL/B2

PNB-Allied Bank merger set in early 2008

By Doris C. Dumlaog

A MERGER BETWEEN TOBACCO MAGNATE Lucio Tan's Philippine National Bank and Allied Banking Corp. will finally push through in early 2008 after the Supreme Court upheld the tycoon's ownership of companies sequestered by the government.

The union will allow PNB, currently the country's sixth biggest bank in assets and expected to be the surviving entity, to boost its ranking to number four with consolidated resources of P377.42 billion.

"That (merger) will happen in the first

half of next year," PNB president Omar Mirer yesterday said in an interview.

He noted that the merger would possibly be implemented through a share swap.

Shares of PNB surged 7.7 percent or P3.50 at the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday on news of the high court ruling that rejected the government's attempt to seize some of Tan's assets.

PNB, once the country's biggest bank, was only waiting for the settlement of the sequestration issue to pursue a merger with Allied Bank.

PNB-ALLIED/B3

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■ **Gross reserves fell to \$32.46B in Nov.** /B4

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Listed Tan companies rise on favorable court ruling

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

STOCKS OF COMPANIES owned by taipan Lucio Tan were among yesterday's biggest gainers in the stock market after

the Supreme Court upheld the taipan's ownership of companies being claimed by the government.

Tan's property arm Eton Properties Philippines Inc. was the

third biggest gainer after its stock rose 10.53 percent or 40 centavos to close at P4 20.

PAL Holdings Inc., which controls flag carrier Philippine Airlines, was the fourth biggest gainer with its share price climbing 8.3 percent or 50 centavos to P6 50.

Philippine National Bank (PNB), also owned by Tan, rose 7.6 percent or P3 50 to P49.50 and was the sixth biggest gainer for the day.

Tan's lead counsel Estelito P. Mendoza said in a statement that the Tan group was vindicated against allegations that the companies held by Tan were acquired by ill-gotten wealth.

"Our clients are most gratified with the Supreme Court decision. It has been 21 long years since the writs of sequestration—which have been declared null and void—have been issued. It proves all along our main contention that there is no prima facie basis that the shares constitute ill-gotten wealth as defined under Executive Order Nos. 1 and 2 and as required by the Constitution," Mendoza said.

Belle spending P1.8B on 2 projects

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

LEISURE HOMES DEVELOPER BELLE Corp. is spending P1.8 billion for two residential projects in Batangas next year.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Belle said the project cost for Lakeside Fairways Phase 6 to 8, an expansion of the subdivision project in Tagaytay Highlands, is about P1.4 billion, excluding land cost.

Belle vice chair Willy Ocier said the new phases of Lakeside Fairways could break ground next year.

The property firm also said it was spending P400 million for a new phase of its Greenlands residential project also at its Tagaytay Highlands property. The amount excludes land cost.

In 2005, Belle completed the first three phases of Plantation Hills at the Greenlands, Belle's new farm lot subdivision.

Belle assistant corporate secretary Michelle San Buenaventura said the costs were expected to be incurred over a period of two to three years.

Belle shifted its principal activity from mining and oil exploration to property development when it built a golf course named Tagaytay Highlands Golf and Country Club in 1989.

Since then, its property projects in the area expanded to include The Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands, Tagaytay Midlands Golf Club, Pinecrest Village, The Villas, The Bellevue, The Woodlands, The Spa and Lodge at Tagaytay Highlands, Alta Mira and Lakeview Heights.

Local . . . From page B1

ber of 2007. This was the time when we had the Glorietta incident, so there was a lot of uncertainty in the market," Gungundo said.

Consumers nationwide were likewise slightly less pessimistic on the economic conditions and wellbeing of their family in the next quarter and in the next 12 months.

Asked why the country's much-improved economic performance in the first nine months had not translated to an upbeat sentiment, Gungundo said: "You have economic growth increasing or accelerating but there are other news and developments that could dampen sentiment, like oil prices, which everybody is watching and everyone can feel. We can't deny that GDP (gross domestic product) is going up, but the other issue (for the consumer) is: am I in the position to feel those beautiful numbers?"

The decline in the economic condition and family financial situation outlook indices was broad-based, with sentiment from all income groups generally deteriorating. The only exception was the perception on family income, where the high- and middle-income groups were slightly more optimistic.

The survey also noted that consumers nationwide anticipated that their expenditures on basic goods and services in the first

quarter of 2008 would continue to rise, especially for food, personal care and effects, electricity and education.

More consumers likewise believed that the peso would remain firm against the dollar but their number declined relative to the previous survey as the index slid to 3.4 percent from 19.4 percent in the third quarter. More consumers also expected an increase in the number of unemployed persons, in interest rates and in the prices of goods and services in the next 12 months.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 7, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
17.5	6.8	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	8.6	9	8.6	8.4	1,216,900
73	43	Bank of the Philippine Islands	62.5	62.5	60.5	62	4,919,200
73.6	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	64.5	65.5	64.5	65	4,440
740	544	China Banking Corp.	670	670	660	660	500
23.6	14	Citibank Savings Bank	23	23	23	23	519,000
0.83	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	4,355,500
75.5	47.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	62	63.5	62	62.5	1,520,700
65.3	36	Philippine National Bank	46	50	46	49.8	1,000
68	46	Philippine Savings Bank	50	60	60	60	989,100
39.57	20.45	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	26.5	26	24.75	25.5	105,300
80	63	Security Bank of the Philippines	74.5	74.5	74.5	74.5	105,300
88	62	Union Bank of the Philippines	44.5	44.5	44	44.5	105,300

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
2.22	0.6	Abnovo Power Corp.	1.9	34	1.68	1.94	490,300
16.25	4.8	Citibank Online com Inc.	12.5	12.5	12	12.25	423,000
8.8	4.7	Flamingo Fund Inc.	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	3,000
1.8	0.5	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	51,000
5.9	4.6	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	5	6	4.95	4.95	348,000
1,970.00	1,580.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,840.00	1,840.00	1,840.00	1,840.00	1,570
6	2.7	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.35	3.4	3.25	3.25	995,000
1,300.00	260	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	100,000
2,500.00	1,970.00	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,900.00	1,900.00	1,900.00	1,900.00	1,290
		Sun Life Insurance Inc.	2,215.00	2,215.00	2,215.00	2,215.00	90

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
0.2	0.02	Abnovo Power Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	1,880,000
0.57	0.22	Abnovo Power Corp.	0.44	0.47	0.43	0.45	8,940,000
70.5	40	First Gen Corp.	62.5	62.5	60.5	61	399,800
92	51.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	77	78	74	76	388,500
18.6	8.8	Manila Water Co. Inc.	16.25	16.25	17.76	17.76	2,785,000
105.45	29.56	Manila Electric Co.	39.5	39.5	36	37	3,089,300
7.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	7	7	6.7	6.7	27,460,000
74	3.96	Petron Corp.	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	10,238,100
14.75	6.4	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	7	7	6.7	6.7	148,700

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
0.2	0.02	Abnovo Power Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	1,880,000
2.32	1.48	Alliance Trust International Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.58	1.58	887,000
61	40.5	Golden Goods Corp.	51.5	52.5	51	51.5	1,553,900
0.88	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	100,000
31	2.08	Roxas Holdings	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	631,000
80	42.5	Sar Miguel Corp. "A"	51	51	50	50.5	142,700
88	43	Sar Miguel Corp. "B"	51.5	52.5	51	51	375,300
0.66	0.33	Swift Foods Inc.	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.48	30,000
20.75	13.5	Universal Robina Corp.	15	15	14.25	14.5	7,498,300

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
6	0.02	Abnovo Power Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	1,880,000
21.5	6	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000,000
8.2	4.95	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	7.8	8	7.9	8	3,000
2	0.81	Southern Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.02	1.04	4,301,700

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
0.5	0.1	Abnovo Power Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.3	0.37	4,900,000

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
3.9	18.75	ABIS-CSI Holdings Corp. PDR	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	70,000
36	2.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.35	3.4	3.28	3.4	34,900,000
0.185	0.0575	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.14	0.13	0.135	2,220,000
1.28	0.29	ARC Group Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.67	0.67	2,220,000
3.85	1.5	ATM Holdings Inc. "A"	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	83,000
2.7	1.5	ATM Holdings Inc. "B"	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	47,000
0.018	0.0075	Abnovo Corp. Res. and Holdings Inc. "A"	0.01	0.01	0.0095	0.0095	81,000,000
8.7	8.8	Abnovo Equity Ventures Inc.	7.1	7.1	7	7	2,520,000
0.021	0.0095	Abnovo Gold Resources Corp.	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.015	84,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4	10,550,000
2.9	0.9	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.46	2.46	2.44	2.44	350,000
8	0.8	Auris Prime Resources Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	10,000
645	400	Ayala Corp.	595	600	590	595	222,470
15.25	7.39	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	13	13	13	13	300
5.8	1.58	Benpre Holdings Corp.	4.58	4.58	4.35	4.35	5,573,000
12	5.8	DMCI Holdings Inc.	10	10.25	9.7	9.9	14,968,000
3.55	1.78	House of Investments Inc.	2	2	2	2	349,000
14.5	8.9	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	237,000
28	14.2	Lodestar Investment Hedge Corp.	20.75	21.5	18	21.25	4,300
11.8	1.5	Mineral Resources Corp.	6.8	7.3	6.8	6.9	10,783,000
8.5	3	PAL Holdings Inc.	6	6.8	6	6.5	131,000
0.28	0.016	Pacific Life Inc.	0.24	0.245	0.225	0.235	192,600,000
0.75	0.9	Pacific Life Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	1,840,000
462.5	268.53	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	146,000
0.73	0.14	SM Investments Corp.	367.5	367.5	357.5	357.5	1,110,300
2	0.92	Singapore Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	7,000
0.75	0.12	Southern Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	6,200,000

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
2.33	1.5	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	17,000
8.9	5	Anchor Land Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.4	7.2	7.4	40,000
1.06	0.4	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.83	0.85	0.83	0.85	4,000
10.25	11.88	Ayala Land Inc.	16.75	17	16	16.25	18,880,000
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.22	1,453,000
4.7	3.05	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4	4	4	4	1,000,000
0.86	0.39	Crown Equities Inc.	0.58	0.59	0.59	0.59	1,000,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	4,146,000
0.99	0.52	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.89	0.89	0.84	0.85	38,920,000
8.9	1.06	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	4.2	4.2	3.7	4.2	4,100
0.47	0.0575	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.245	0.245	2,190,000
1.48	0.81	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.02	1.04	7,821,000
2.44	1.32	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	87,722,000
1.12	0.31	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	8,970,000
4.6	2.07	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.35	48,360,000
6.4	1.5	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	4.3	4.6	4.3	4.55	596,000
5.2	2.2	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	2.95	3.2	2.85	3.1	433,000
0.7	0.19	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	560,000
0.88	0.32	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.45	0.45	140,000
0.2	1.7	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	1.23	1.23	1.2	1.2	1,587,000
23	14.5	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	14.25	14.25	14	14.25	32,000
5.9	1.93	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	4.05	4.05	4	4	12,925,000
13.9	7.78	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	12,925,000
3.25	1.5	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	2.22	2.22	2.18	2.2	1,603,000
4.5	0.38	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	2.02	2.02	2	2	82,000
0.48	0.48	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	0.63	0.71	0.63	0.67	7,850,000
0.94	0.09	Ever Properties Philippines Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.27	1,173,000

5.29	1.58	Bentley Holdings Corp	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	17,000
12	5.8	BNIC Holdings Inc	10	10.25	9.7	9.9	14,562
3.55	1.76	BNIC Holdings Inc	2	2	2	2	34,99
14.5	8.9	House of Investments Inc	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	239
28	1.42	JG Summit Holdings Inc	20.75	21.5	18	21.25	4
11.5	1.3	Lodestar Investment Hedge Corp	6.8	7.3	6.8	6.9	10,783
8.3	3	Mineral Resources Corp.	6	8.8	6	8.5	13
0.26	0.016	PAI Holdings Inc	0.24	0.245	0.225	0.235	192,654
		Pacific Inc, A					1,000

TeleTech to hire 10,000 more call center agents

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NASDAQ-LISTED TELETECH yesterday announced plans to hire 10,000 more call center agents as it is set to open up 10 new call centers across the nation within the next two years.

Maulik Parekh, TeleTech vice president and general manager for Asia, said in a briefing the move was being made as the company achieved a 15,000-strong workforce spread in 10 centers in Luzon and the Visayas.

"As far as we know, we are

currently the biggest call center operations in the country," Parekh said. "That is, for those who are doing 'true' call center work, 95 percent of our deliveries are in voice-based services."

He said that even as the firm surpassed its target number of workers as of November, it would continue to hire and would take in at least 200 more people before yearend.

Also, Parekh said TeleTech would keep its strategy of locating in second-tier cities and that it had recently signed lease

agreements with two parties.

"We are set to open a facility in SM City Pampanga in San Fernando City and another in Robinsons Sta Rosa in Laguna, both in the first half of 2008," he said.

The official said the Pampanga center, which would be at the new wing of the mall, would have 1,700 seats while the one in Laguna would have 1,000 seats.

The Indian-born

expatriate explained that TeleTech was continually looking for new sites and that the preference was areas far from existing call center hubs.

"We also look for locations

where there is a high concentration of people," he said. "Six of our 10 existing centers are in shopping malls."

He was referring to call centers in Novaliches in Quezon City, Cainta in Rizal, Lipa City,

Bacoor in Cavite, Bacolod City and Iloilo City.

The other four call centers are in Pasay City near the SM Mall of Asia, Bonifacio Global City in Taguig, Dumaguete City and Cebu City.

Gov't revenue effort surged as of Sept.

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT'S REVENUE EFFORT improved in the first nine months of the year due mainly to the surge in privatization receipts.

Data from the Department of Finance showed that revenue effort as of September reached 17.2 percent, up from only 4.4 percent in the same period last year.

Revenue effort refers to total government revenues as a percentage of country's gross domestic product (GDP).

Revenue effort takes into account the taxes, fees and charges imposed by government agencies and proceeds from privatization.

Tax effort, on the other hand, only covers taxes and duties collected by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

In the first nine months, total revenues hit P812.257 billion, equivalent to 17.2 percent of GDP during the period of P4.731 trillion.

Of the revenues, P682.975 billion came from taxes and duties while P129.154 billion was contributed by nontax revenues, such as fees and charges.

Privatization proceeds accounted for the balance of P42.393 billion.

Privatization proceeds during the period was P41.3 billion more than the P1.09 billion recorded last year.

This is due to more intensive efforts to sell state-owned assets.

The jump in privatization proceeds partly made up for the shortfall in the tax and duty collection of the BIR and BOC.

Assets sold this year include the government's 60-percent stake in PNOG Energy Development Corp., 46-percent stake in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC), the Iloilo airport property and a minority stake in Philippine National Bank.

PNB-Allied ...

From page B1

The Lucio Tan group, which controls 67 percent of PNB, has mandated ING as financial adviser for the merger of the two banks.

Mier said another financial adviser would have to be hired to negotiate valuation issues on behalf of minority stockholders.

PNB, which has a market capitalization of about P30 billion, has a public float of 33 percent (including a fund managed by investment bank UBS).

Allied Bank, on the other hand, is about 70-percent controlled by Tan while the rest is held by minority shareholders, Mier said.

As of end-September, PNB had assets of P233.76 billion while Allied Bank had P134.66 billion.

CLSA Securities head of research Alfred Dy said the forthcoming PNB-Allied merger would be a win-win situation and in line with the ongoing consolidation in the Philippine banking system.

Dy said the union would result in cost-synergies once the branch networks of the two banks were combined.

"On the marketing front, there will be more branches to support one brand," Dy said.



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RP needs food aid due to natural calamities, UN agency says

By Amy R. Remo

THE UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND Agriculture Organization said the Philippines needs a localized food emergency assistance program, due to a spate of floods and landslides brought about by natural calamities.

In its latest Crop Prospects and Food Situation report, FAO said that along with countries like Vietnam and Nepal, the Philippines needs food aid.

Aside from the Philippines, the FAO report disclosed that 37 countries worldwide were currently facing food crises.

It added that increases in international prices have translated into higher retail prices of basic foods in many countries.

According to FAO, developing countries were the most affected by the food inflation since they depend heavily on imports to cover their cereal (or major staple) consumption requirements.

Meanwhile, low-income population groups are anticipated to bear the heaviest burden, because their daily energy intake depends more on cereal-based products and the share of food in their total expenditures is high, the report said.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap earlier said the country needs to import at least 1 million metric tons next year to meet local requirements.

"There is no particular import figure yet but since we lack sufficient supply

of rice, we have to import some 1 million to 1.5 million MT of rice," he said.

He also said that the country's population growth rate contributes to the need to import more rice every year.

Yap was happy to note though that in the past few years, import volume has not exceeded the 1.6 million-1.7 million MT range, even if the population has been increasing by at least 2 percent a year.

"This only means that local rice production is catching up with the coun-

try's requirements," Yap noted.

"Food security is critical. More than sufficiency, it is security. Accessible, affordable and available food is the mantra of the agriculture department," Yap said.

As a net buyer of rice in Asia, the Philippines imported 1.87 million metric tons this year, mostly from Vietnam.

Rice imports are intended to ensure sufficiency of the grain during the traditional lean production months of July to September.

Gross reserves fell to \$32.46B in Nov.

Traders say there is no stopping rise of peso, now at 41.71

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES' FOREIGN RESERVES in November slightly fell to \$32.46 billion from the record-high of \$32.5 billion posted in October despite strong foreign exchange inflows ushering in the holidays, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

"The month-on-month decline in the gross international reserves (GIR) level was attributed mainly to outflows arising from the Bangko Sentral's net foreign exchange operations and payments of maturing forex obligations of the national government and the BSP," BSP officer-in-charge Diwa Guinigundo said in a press statement.

Currency traders said the BSP had been heavily buying US dollars at the spot foreign exchange market to stem the peso's appreciation and to prevent pumping in excess pesos to the financial system, which could drive up inflation. Some of the dollar purchases are then locked up in foreign currency swap contracts instead of being placed in the GIR.

The GIR is a key indicator of a country's ability to cover the foreign exchange requirements of its economy. It consists of the central bank's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, foreign investments and special drawing rights from multilateral institutions like the International Monetary Fund.

Guinigundo said the outflows in November were partly offset by the receipt of income from the BSP's investments abroad, as well as the deposit of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. with the central bank. Proceeds from the sale of state assets under the government's privatization program form part of the PSALM's deposit.

At its current level, the GIR can cover 5.8 months of the country's imports of goods and payments of services and income.

It can also cover 5.5 times the country's short-term external debt based on original maturity, and 3.3 times the residual maturity.

Yesterday, the peso closed 41.71 at its strongest level since May 2000, on the back of strong remittances ahead of Christmas.

Currency traders said there was no stopping the rise of the peso.

"The peso will continue to gain against the US dollar through next year," Philippine Savings Bank president Pascual Garcia III said.

The local currency gained by another 14 centavos from Thursday's closing rate of 41.88 to the US dollar.

Yesterday's volume at the Philippine Dealing System, however, thinned to \$306.5 million from \$419.5 million on Thursday.

Survey: More jobs opened up in '05

By Michelle V. Remo

EMPLOYMENT IN THE MANUFACTURING sector registered an increase in 2005 from that in 2003, due to the opening of several establishments that year, according to the National Statistics Office's Survey of Philippine Business and Industry (ASPI).

The survey, which was released by the NSO only last Wednesday, showed that there were 1,025,814 individuals employed in the manufacturing sector in 2005—up 3.9 percent from 986,921 in 2003.

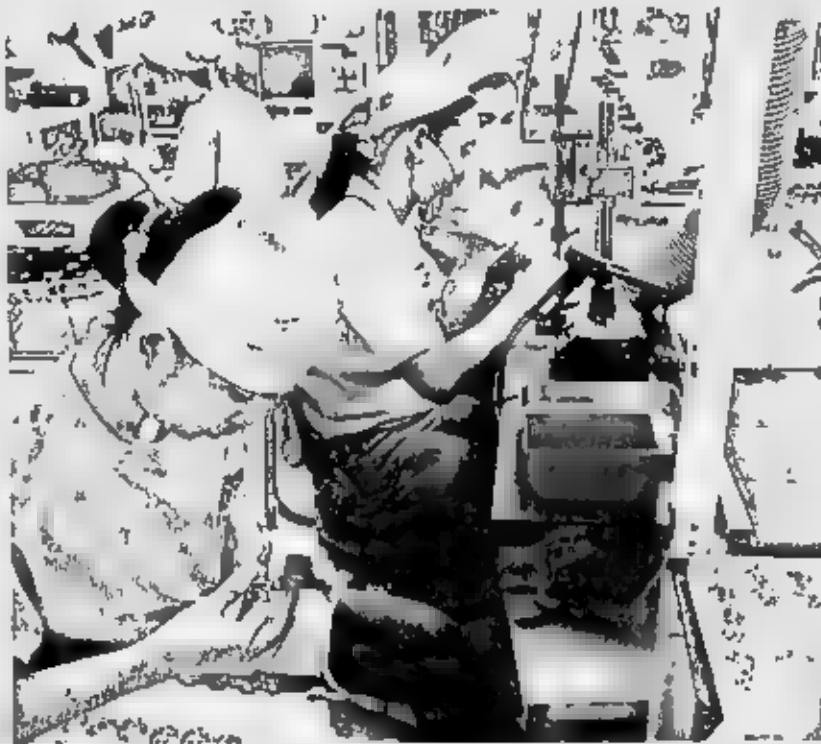
The figures took into account the employees working in manufacturing firms with an employment base of 20.

The increase in employment in the manufacturing sector was consistent with the higher number of manufacturing firms registered in 2005. The increase in employment, however, was slower than the rise in the number of firms that opened.

There were 6,554 manufacturing establishments that had at least 20 employees in 2005. This marked an 11.1-percent increase from the 5,901 recorded in 2003.

During the presentation of the ASPI at Century Park Hotel in Manila, NSO Administration Carmelita Erisa said that the results of the survey confirmed statements from the government's economic managers that the Philippine economy was improving in terms of employment, corporate revenues and individual income.

She added that the manufacturing sector was one of the contribu-



WORKERS assemble micro motor fans for computers at the Sanya Denki plant in Subic. In 2005, there were 136,223 people reported to be working in the electronics components industry alone.

tors to growth and higher employment in the overall economy.

The wearing apparel subsector employed the most number of workers in the manufacturing industry at 159,272, accounting for 15.5 percent of the total employees in the industry in 2005.

The food subsector ranked second, with 147,663 employees that accounted for 14.4 percent of the total.

The electronics components industry followed with 136,223 employees that accounted for 13.3 percent of the total.

The survey also revealed that the average annual income for every employee in the manufactur-

ing sector stood at P163,748.

Of the subsectors of the manufacturing industry, the survey said, petroleum gave the highest compensation to its employees.

The average annual income of each worker in the petroleum subsector stood at P1,087,088 in 2005, much higher than the overall average for the manufacturing sector.

A far second was the transport equipment subsector, employees of which earned an average annual income of P355,669 in 2005.

Chemical products got the third spot, as its employees received an annual average income of P314,252.

Energy officials tap SGV, UA&P to help monitor oil firms

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY HAS tapped Sycip, Gorres, Velayo and Co. Inc. and the University of Asia and the Pacific to help it monitor the finances of local oil firms, to ensure that they will not earn too much at the expense of motorists.

In a statement issued yesterday, Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said SGV and UA&P would collect data on local oil firms' financial operations, to enable the government to adopt a realistic program to mitigate the im-

pact of rising oil prices on local pump prices.

He said the data to be collected would be used to assess the impact of escalating world oil prices on the local economy.

Based on initial estimates, the impact of high oil prices on industry was placed at only 3 to 5 percent. The transport sector took a bigger blow, with rising prices slashing 25 to 30 percent from their gross income.

While tightening its watch over the oil firms, he said the DOE would

continue to work with all stakeholders to cushion the impact of escalating world oil prices on local consumers.

Last month, oil refiners Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. had committed to increase the number of stations offering diesel discounts to public utility vehicles from the existing 150 each to 300 stations each.

"Those 300 stations will be nationwide and not just in Metro Manila. We'll also look at providing gasoline discounts in some areas in the coun-

try," Shell country chair Edgar Chua had earlier said, responding to calls from public transport operators that use gasoline-fed vehicles.

Petron chair Nicolas Alcantara, for his part, said the oil firm would also expand its network of stations that offered autoLPG, or liquefied petroleum gas used as transport fuel.

From 16 stations with autoLPG dispensers, he said this number should go up in the coming months.

At current pump prices, autoLPG is priced P15-P16 a liter lower than regular gasoline.

BSP controls growth in money supply

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas was able to control growth in the country's broad money supply despite strong inflows from overseas Filipinos and foreign investments.

Year-on-year growth in October came in at 11.4 percent—comparable to the figure recorded the previous month.

The growth was in line with the central bank's efforts to contain domestic liquidity (m3) below the 20 percent threshold, which is necessary to keep a benign inflation environment.

On a month-on-month basis, seasonally adjusted domestic liquidity grew by 1.7 percent in October, a reversal of the 1.1 percent decline in the previous month.

Domestic liquidity, or m3, is the broadest measure of money within an economy. It is used to estimate money in circulation, demand deposits, money market funds and short-term repurchase agreements. It is one of the indica-

tors closely monitored by the BSP, which uses it in setting monetary policy.

Net foreign assets of depositary corporations continued to drive the growth in liquidity, even as net foreign assets slowed down slightly to 29.7 percent year-on-year from 32.2 percent in September.

"The trend is associated with the continued foreign exchange inflows from overseas Filipino remittances, exports and direct and portfolio investments," BSP Officer-in-Charge Diwa Guinigundo said.

Meanwhile, net domestic assets declined for the third consecutive month, by 6 percent in October, as the net "other items" account—which includes the central bank's special deposit accounts (SDAs) and overnight borrowings—continued to reflect a negative balance after the BSP implemented mopping up measures in May.

The growth of credit to the public sector eased to 8.3 per-

cent from 11.6 percent in September. Similarly, the growth of credit to the private sector softened to 4.8 percent from 8.5 percent the previous month, as other funding sources supplemented the credit extended by the banking system to the corporate sector.

"The BSP will continue to closely monitor developments in domestic liquidity to ensure that monetary policy is delivering price stability, which is conducive to a broad-based, durable and robust expansion of economic activity," Guinigundo said.

The central bank has mopped up excess liquidity more effectively since it transformed its high-yielding SDAs into a more powerful tool last May.

The BSP has turned to rely more on the SDAs than overnight borrowings.

Under the new rules, even banks' trust departments and non-bank state corporations can place funds with the SDAs



GUINIGUNDO

and earn attractive interest rates.

The central bank has likewise made these instruments eligible as compliance to banks' 50-percent liquidity floor, or the portion of deposits and deposit substitutes required to be held as a buffer during bad times.

Doris C. Dumlao

RP companies bag medical transcription deals in US

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION sector has bagged \$1.4 million (about P58.4 million) worth of deals with American clients in a single marketing sweep.

According to the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, a part of the Department of Trade and Industry, the recent mission to the American Health Information Management Association exhibition and conference in Philadelphia provided an opportunity to show large US companies that the Philippine sector is capable of handling US accounts and has enough headroom for future demand.

Ahuma is a professional association that represents more than 51,000 specially educated health information management professionals who work throughout the US healthcare industry.

Industry projections show that Philippine annual revenues

for transcription would be at 20 million lines—translating to \$1.2 million—and 130,000 charts for medical coding, amounting to some \$175,500.

According to the Medical Transcription Industry Association of the Philippines, demand for MT services would reach \$301 million in 2010.

The increase would be driven by the rise in US healthcare spending because of its aging population, and increasing demand for health maintenance organizations.

Citem organized the Ahuma mission, bringing over a group of MT firms that include ELink Transcription Academy Inc., E-Transcribe Global Transcription Services and Training Inc., GlobalQuest BPO Specialists Inc. and Rapid Data Services LLC.

Citem hinted that the domestic MT sector may undertake through Ahuma a focused market study on global sourcing trends, best practices and outsourcing niches and opportunities.

People, Events & Products

'Ready, set, RoRo!' 2007

MORE DESTINATIONS. MORE teams. More celebrities. More fun! This year's "Ready, Set, RoRo!" DBP Interisland Race by the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) promises to be more exciting and informative than its debut race, as it dashes through the country's major islands from Dec. 11 to 15.

"With the success enjoyed by the inaugural race held last year, we have prepared a more far-reaching setting for our 2007 participants, covering additional areas and taking a Mindanao to Manila route," explained DBP President and CEO Reynaldo G. David.

This year's race shall kick-off Dec. 11 in Cagayan de Oro, signaling the start of a grueling 1,157-km land and sea (via RoRo) adventure across 10 more key RoRo destinations before the touchdown finish at The Fort Bonifacio High Street in Taguig.

10 teams composed of one celebrity and two non-celebrity participants will be subjected to nu-

merous physical and mental challenges about the RoRo, the key cities/islands they will be visiting, and even these different provinces' specialty products.

Among the celebrities who are all revved-up and ready to go include: Pinoy Big Brother's Nene Tamayo and Chr. Alcala; hunk Ryan Eigenmann and Brad Turvey; along with strong-willed damsels Alyssa Alano and Jackie Rivas.

"We are pleased with the expected turnout in participation for this year's race which almost doubled in number. This means more people have become aware, have experienced, or are simply raring at a chance to experience how convenient, cost-effective, and enjoyable maximizing the RoRo could be," David said.

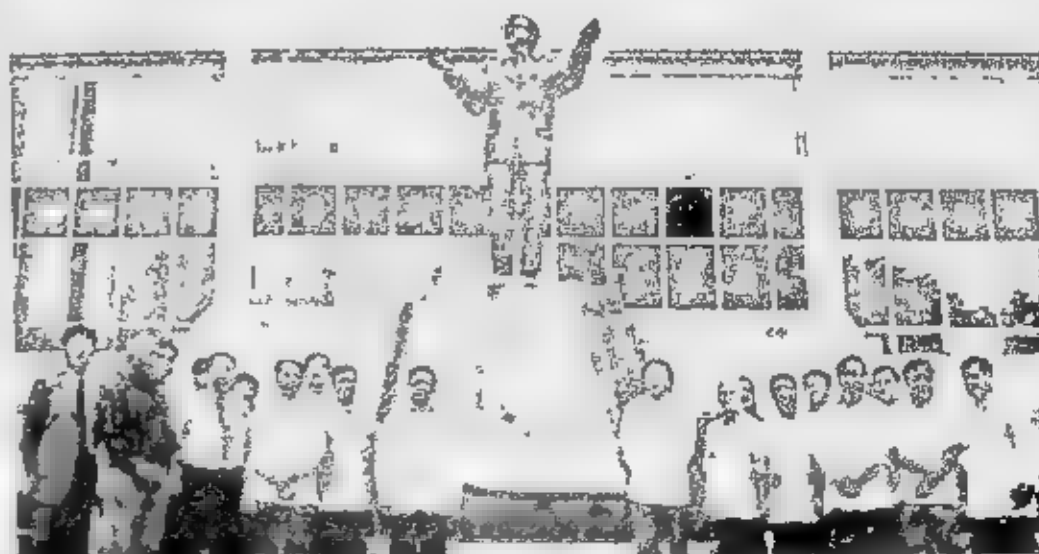
Whether you are a foreign or local tourist interested in exploring the archipelago's different islands with your family and friends without the unnecessary extra expenses, or a businessman

interested in transporting your goods and products at a lower cost; then the Roll-on/Roll-off (RoRo) ferries under the improved Strong Republic Nautical Highway project is the answer to all your prayers.

"One of the best things about the RoRo is the opportunity it presents to our kababayans, and tourists as well, that it is possible to gracefully mix tourism and commerce... and this is exactly what the DBP Interisland Race illustrates," David pointed out.

So, who will take Jao Mapa and Blue Team-South's crown as champions for this year's "Ready, Set, RoRo!" DBP Interisland Race? Be sure to take part and have this event on check from a RoRo route nearest you to find out!

For more information and inquiries about the "Ready, Set, RoRo!" DBP Interisland Race Year 2, call 638-9478, e-mail dbprace@beginnings.com.ph, or log on to www.dbp-readysetro.com.



PANASONIC MANUFACTURING PHILIPPINES AT 40

Panasonic Manufacturing Philippines Corp (PMPC) recently marked its 40th anniversary, and part of its celebration was the unveiling of the statue of PMPC's founding chair Jesus V. Del Rosario. Shown are the members of PMPC top management led by PMPC president Reynaldo S. Lico and some selected business partners. The

chair of the board of the Del Rosario Group of Companies Jaime C. Del Rosario graced the occasion. Established in 1967 through the pioneering pursuit of Jesus V. Del Rosario, PMPC is the first Filipino-Japanese joint venture operation in the area of consumer electronics in the Philippines.

A gem of an events place in Greenbelt

EMERGING AS THE HOTTEST BAR in Greenbelt, Tropezz is the favorite venue for chic private and corporate parties in Greenbelt 3, Makati City. Large enough to house 250 people, Tropezz boasts of a built-in state-of-the-art sound and lights system and reasonably priced and mouth-watering international cuisine.

The venue of choice of many exclusive gatherings, the inherent advantage at Tropezz is the built-in sound and acoustic system and the well-chosen entertainment grid provided by Dotcelebrations. Each celebration in Tropezz is a success great food, great drinks, outstanding music.

Located right in the middle of Greenbelt, across the park, the place has hosted almost all the big events-the launch of Europac with Cebu Pacific, the celebration of Globe, the Cathayland recognition, Chevron, Jam 88.3, The Imelda Collections, Wyeth party, the relaunch of Studio 23, Voice of McDonald's, to name a few.

"A perfect events place, we make it easy for the clients. It is so convenient to simply allow the staff of Tropezz to help coordinate the food, the band, the sound system and all the client has to do is relax and have fun", said Jiji Fernandez, owner of

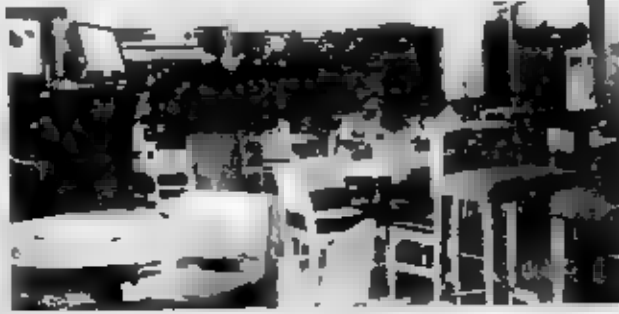
Tropezz.

Although the name evokes a French feel, Tropezz actually serves Philippine and Mediterranean fusion. Whimsically referred to as "international islands" cuisine, the food is really nothing exotic.

"We wanted to have a little of everything-Chinese, Thai, Filipino, French, Spanish and American. At the same time, we were careful not to duplicate anything that other restaurants in the area already offer," adds Isa Pascual.

The gourmet cuisine is evident in the menu which has scored early bestsellers. Belly mucho is slow roast pork belly glazed with mandarin orange and hoisin sauce, served with parsley rice. Crab attack is crab meat marinated in curry powder mixed with thick béchamel, rolled, breaded and deep fried. Connecting flight is chicken wings cooked in classic adobo, deep-fried and glazed with minced chicken liver.

Diners will also love Tropezz house specialties Fish Out of Water (native kunilaw in coconut milk), Caviar de Ifugao (paté of



tinapa with cream cheese and butter), Ravioli Bicolana (Italian-inspired laing), Marina Haponesa (smoked bangus belly with eggplant and orange laced teriyaki sauce), Linguine de Adobo (pasta in Carbonara sauce topped with classic chicken adobo).

The servings are generous. The pasta and salad dishes can be shared by two people. For desserts, pastry chef Kat Pascual has runaway sweets with her halo-halo cheesecake and flourless chocolate cake.

This early, Tropezz has become a favorite haunt in the Makati area for those who want to satisfy their culinary cravings and musical moods. The restaurant opens its doors as early as 11 a.m. to cater to the Makati lunch crowd, and unlike its neighbors, does not close until 2 a.m. Business is from Mondays to Sundays until 1 a.m.

Cilostazol in PAD and stroke management

PERIPHERAL ARTERIAL DISEASE (PAD) and stroke have a few things in common-both are causes of death and disability, both are due to blocked arteries and the antiplatelet medicine cilostazol (Pletal) can help prevent both illnesses.

Antiplatelets are drugs used to prevent blood clots from forming, the latter which can lead to heart attack, stroke and PAD complications such as leg gangrene. Cilostazol is a blood thinning drug that prevents blood clotting which may cause plaque build-ups within the arteries. It is one of the treatments prescribed by doctors for PAD and prevention of stroke.

"As well as the disability created by PAD, it can sometimes be an early warning of potential heart disease or stroke," said Dr. Simon Green from the Queensland University of Technology School of Human Movement Studies.

PAD is a disease caused by blocked blood vessels in the limb areas (arms and legs). It causes leg cramps or pain during mobility. And when severe, becomes disabling.

Just like PAD, stroke is also caused by blocked blood vessels but in another area the brain. Limited blood circulation in the brain leads to inadequate supply of oxygen. When this happens, it may cause complications such as paralysis with or without life-

time disability.

Health experts are alarmed that not enough information regarding stroke or PAD preventions are disseminated. "It is disturbing that so many people do not understand that many strokes can be prevented. There are a number of risk factors that can be controlled to reduce the chances of stroke," said Dr. Erin Lalor from the National Stroke Foundation.

Blood thinning agents like cilostazol can be used for the preventive treatment of stroke. The Cilostazol Stroke Prevention Study (CSPS), a clinical trial involving 1,000 prior stroke patients, found that patients who were given cilostazol had a 41.7-percent risk-reduction of developing another stroke, compared to patients on placebo.

Patients should be relieved of the disabling PAD symptoms and should be protected from risk of secondary stroke. Experience with Cilostazol (Pletal) as an antiplatelet is supported by evidence-based trials for more than 10 years. It is the innovator that provides trusted and proven efficacy and long-term safety compared to other generic equivalents.

For information on PAD and stroke issues and prevention, call the customer hotline at 811-4723 for GMA/Metro Manila or 1-800-1888-4723 for provincial calls.



'FAMILYANG ALASKA' FULL FORCE IN NEW DESIGN

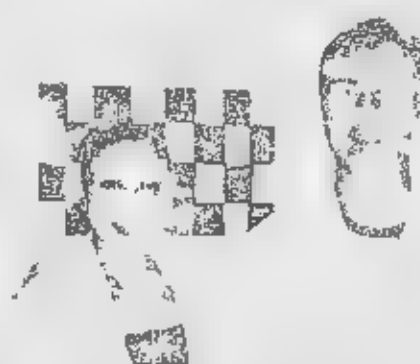
Officials of Alaska Milk Corp and Robinsons Supermarket, as partners, came out in full force in support of the unveiling of the new packaging design for Alaska Powdered Filled Milk at the newly renovated Robinsons Galleria Supermarket last August. "Diamond Star" and brand endorser of Alaska Powdered Filled Milk Maricel Soriano, together with the general manager of Robinsons Supermarket Jody Gadia, and senior vice president and group general manager of Robinsons retail group Robina Gokongwei-Pe, did the honors of unveiling the giant replica of the new Alaska Powdered Filled Milk. Soriano also

toured the new Robinsons Galleria Supermarket, chatting with shoppers about the new look of Alaska Powdered Milk. Fans of Soriano and mall-goers were, likewise, treated to autograph-signing and picture-taking with the star. The product now comes in a more colorful and attractive packaging that better exemplifies what Alaska Powdered Filled Milk is to the Filipino family. Shown, from left, during the unveiling, are Robina Gokongwei-Pe, Mark Tansongkum, Ben Sebastian, Roco Cahillig, Ruby Alex, and Ronnie Ong with the Alaska Family, Maricel Soriano, and Ben Fernando.

PHRS launches travel website

PHILIPPINE HOTEL RESERVATIONS SERVICE, the country's first and only central hotel reservations hotline, just launched its new website with the most complete and comprehensive information about the Philippines as a premier tourist destination. The website features 13 major locations informing guests on where to go, what to see and where to stay! The Hotel Directory lists specific hotel information, room types and rates at over 400 hotels in Cebu, Boracay, Palawan, Bohol, Baguio, and many more... depending on the guest's preferred location and budget. The website is perfect for local travelers who tend to travel in bigger groups as the site can offer hotels that can accommodate any group size. Even corporate or business travelers will love the quick and easy search buttons and hotel pop-ups for their every travel destination.

Other great features on the site include a live chat room, where guests can chat online with an expert travel consultant; a travel story section where one can read travel related articles and stories; and a travel forum section where guests can post general or specific questions or post own experiences to share with others. Experience and enjoy the beauty and nature of the Philippines. See it for yourself! Visit www.philippinehotel-reservations.com. Or call hotline 812-PHRS (7477).



TAPALLA COMPLETES NY COURSE

Valerie C. Tapalla, managing director of the Wilma Academia of Speech & Etiquette, has recently completed her "Public Speaking Course" under Larry Gleeson, an actor and speech coach in New York City. Shown are Valerie Tapalla and Larry Gleeson during a break in their class at the Embassy Suites Hotel at Battery Park, New York City.

Verzio introduces world's 1st 3G dual SIM handset in RP

REGIONAL 3C BRAND AND Singapore-based Verzio introduces Duplii (the world's first 3G tri-band dual SIM handset in the Philippines) and Twinn (the world's first EDGE/E-GPRS tri-band dual SIM handset).

Equipped with 3G and tri-band capabilities, the Duplii enables video calls and conferencing, high-speed data access and multimedia streaming.

Duplii also has both Qualcomm and Philips NXP processors, which are long-life platforms designed for minimal power consumption. It comes with an FM radio and a real value 1.3-megapixel camera. The handset is capable of PC Sync, allowing full data synchronization, including contacts.

Besides the EDGE/E-GPRS and tri-band features, the Twinn is the first dual SIM slider phone in the market. It is also compact in size and offers touch screen functionality. It has a real value 1.3-megapixel camera and uses a Philips NXP processor.

Haldane vice president and general manager Chris Uyco cites that Verzio handset users can now enjoy the convenience of transferring their contact list via PC Sync or via Bluetooth. Both models can each contain 1,000 names and up to 3,000 numbers. Haldane Philippines is the authorized distributor of Verzio products, which currently distributes O2, Sony Ericsson, Canon, and BenQ in the country.

December 6-16, 2007



MCDONALD'S UNVEILS

PARTNERSHIP WITH WSI

A fun-filled Christmas experience filled with your favorite food treats looms near as Worldbox Services International (WSI) recently tied up with McDonald's for the 7th World Bazaar Festival, ongoing from Dec. 6 to 16 at the World Trade Center. Stuff yourself with delicious delights from McDonald's as you splurge your way to the biggest and most exciting shopping galore ever. Shown are (from left) Koi Castillo, MRM supervisor, and Jill Althale Ang, WSI managing director. For more information, call WSI at 531-6350/74 or 534-3615, fax 533-2026 or e-mail info@worldbox.com.

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Text us your feedback: inquirer has name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Solving the holiday binge for overweight, obese patients

By Charles E. Buban

THE SEASON TO feast with family and friends is Yuletide, an excusable time to consume mountains of calories and hope that this time around, the resolution to lose the excess weight gained during the holidays be kept.

"But as always, it's hard to stick to a New Year's resolution and that includes shedding off that holiday weight," said Dr. Ferdinand Samonte, one of the country's leading bariatric surgeon (specializing in various surgical procedures to treat obesity) and main proponent of Lap-Band surgery and BiB placement.

But Samonte clarified that being overweight and obese is not always simply a result of overindulgence in highly palatable foods or of a lack of physical activity.

"Biological factors (like hormones and genetics), stress, drugs and aging also play a role. However, dietary factors and physical activity patterns strongly influence the energy balance equation (when people eat more calories than they burn off, their bodies store the extra calories as fat) and they are also the major modifiable factors," Samonte explained.

Many, varied consequences

He added that the health consequences of being overweight and obese are many and varied.

In fact, even moderate weight excess of 4.5 to 9 kg for a person of average height increases the risk of death, particularly among adults aged 30 to 64 years.

Moreover, individuals who are obese have a 50 to 100 percent increased risk of premature death from all causes, compared to individuals with a healthy weight.

"Raised body mass index is a major risk factor for chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease (mainly heart disease and stroke), Type 2 diabetes, osteoarthritis and even some forms of cancers (endometrial, breast and colon)," Samonte reported.



SAMONTE is with one of his patients, Helene Gillmont of Belgium.

Stigmatized

He also added that even without the disease risks, an overweight or obese person is more likely to be stigmatized as they are being perceived to have undesirable bodily appearance or even character (being lazy, dirty).

This is why, Samonte said, obese or even overweight patients should be treated seriously.

Approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration in 2001, Lap-Band surgery is considered the safest and least invasive bariatric surgery for weight-loss patients.

"The Lap-Band is a small, inflatable belt placed around the upper portion of the patient's stomach that functions to restrict the amount of food consumed, slow the emptying of food from the stomach, and provide a constant sensation of being 'full.' Operating time is less than an hour and most patients are ready to leave the hospital the following day," Samonte explained.

Strict diet

He explained that as with all surgical weight-loss programs, it is imperative that Lap-Band patients adhere

to a strict postoperative diet.

"After surgery, patients must restrict themselves to consuming less calories per day (to be determined by a nutritionist or dietitian). On average, patients who undergo Lap-Band surgery experience a 50 percent loss of excess weight," Samonte reported.

Among the good things about the Lap-Band, Samonte said, is that this type of surgery doesn't restrict the patient from eating many of the food that he or she likes. "The only thing you have to watch are the empty calories meaning food that are not nutritious but contain a lot of calories such as junk food," he said.

Samonte added that since a number of obese or even overweight patients would consider their case as sensitive, his patients usually see him at his clinic in De Los Santos Medical Center in Quezon City or at the BiB and Lap-Band Center (21/F Medical Plaza Makati) in Legaspi Village Makati City.

"Aside from the expertise that patients demand from their doctor as well as the completeness and safety of the facility, Lap-Band surgery patients highly appreciate the utmost privacy that these two locations provide," Samonte said.

Cutting-edge magnets

WE HAVE MAGNETIC ENCOUNTERS every day, literally. Kitchen gadgets, credit cards, TV sets and various car parts all contain magnets. From the added ease of replacing screws using a magnetic screwdriver to the huge advances in transportation such as levitating trains, magnets have certainly made a lot of things more convenient.

However, magnetism is anything but simple. A thorough understanding requires a grasp of quantum mechanics, and many scientists still have a lot to learn about the pieces of metal that stick to our fridge door. Arlene Clarice Tan of the Ateneo de Manila University Chemistry Department enlightens us here.

Basically, magnetic fields are generated by moving charged particles, specifically electrons that orbit around atoms and spin on their individual axes. When the magnetic fields of these electrons align and add up, the atoms and therefore, the materials become magnetic as well. This is why iron, cobalt and many other metals are magnetic.

EUREKA!

Queenie N. Lee-Chua



nonize information storage.

Since the discovery of the first ferromagnetic molecule in 1986, tremendous progress has been made. But much is yet to be understood about why these materials behave as they do and studies have yet to be done before commercial applications can be perfected. The discovery of the existence of these materials is one thing. The design and tailoring of properties to suit various demands is another. Still, the possibilities have motivated scientists across the globe to come together to better understand this new class of magnets.

Magnetic pioneer visits RP

Michel Verdager, a French chemist, is one of the individuals who have taken a passionate interest in molecular magnets. An emeritus professor at the Université Pierre et Marie Curie in Paris, Verdager holds credit for much of the progress in the field.

He is committed to establishing European coordination through the Molecular Magnets Program of the European Science Foundation and to lecturing worldwide on molecular magnetism. He holds awards from the Spanish and French chemical societies and from the French Academy of Sciences.

In January, Michel will visit the Philippines to talk more about his work at the Tenth Eurasia Conference on Chemical Sciences. For more information, go to <http://eurasiachem10.philippinechem.org> or e-mail eurasiachem10@yahoo.com.

New class of magnets

However, an emerging class of magnets has caught the attention of scientists and engineers all over the world because of their new properties. Unlike conventional magnets made of metals, these magnetic materials, known as molecular magnets, are made from organic and inorganic molecules, which according to scientific laws should not be magnetic at all.

Scientists are excited because they can now create lightweight, transparent and possibly biocompatible magnets, which they cannot do with ordinary metallic magnets. For example, these magnets from polymers can be used in space programs and other areas where weight is an issue. Biocompatible magnets can be used in medical imaging. Single-molecule magnets can be used in miniature electronic devices and are expected to revolu-



NOBEL prize winning chemist Michel Verdager

Peanut shells for the seas

STEAMED PEANUTS ARE

A fairly inexpensive and easy-to-eat snack available from various vendors on the street. Their popularity is evidenced by the shells that litter the ground.

A recent study suggests that those same discarded peanut shells could help protect the environment, if they were dumped somewhere else.

In the current issue of the International Journal of Environment and Pollution, researchers from Mersin University in Turkey report that ground-up, untreated peanut shells can effectively remove copper ions from wastewater that might come from companies like fertilizer producers and metal plating facilities. The low-cost process using these natural by-products could be used to reduce heavy metal concentrations in these waters before they flow into rivers, lakes and oceans.

Pollute air, water

Though the Philippines has long been considered a country rich in mineral resources like gold, nickel and copper resources, extracting these ores has not been without incident. Several studies done on the coral reefs off Marinduque since large quantities of Mar-copper mine tailings or residues spilled into the Boac River back in 1996, for example, have linked the run-offs to changing levels of heavy metal concentrations in the corals. Residents near mines in Albay, Marinduque and Negros Occidental have also complained that the tailings from these sites pollute the air and water around them.

Multivitamin labels indicate that copper is a trace element needed by the body; exposure to high concentrations of the heavy metal can be hazardous to human health, damaging the liver and kidneys. Sponge-like substances called adsorbents pull other substances can remove heavy metals from the wastewater, but the treatments are expensive and require special facilities.

Low-cost methods

Together with her colleagues, graduate student H. Dugyu Ozsoy and the study's lead

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon



author, looked for low-cost methods of removing the heavy metal residues from the water, using either something abundant and naturally-occurring or already a waste product from another process.

Based on previous studies suggesting that agricultural byproducts such as banana pith and pine tree bark, Ozsoy's team chose to examine the properties of sawdust from the Turkish pine and peanut shells.

To test the materials for adsorption efficiency, the researchers collected raw peanut shells, washed them in distilled water, and then dried them in an oven set at low heat to make sure all the moisture had been removed. The shells were then ground and then placed in flasks containing copper solutions.

Series of tests

The researchers then conducted a series of tests using equal amounts of sawdust and ground shells to determine the best conditions under which each adsorbent would work best. Temperature variations, for example, made very little difference to the adsorption rates, though the peanut shells adsorbed the heavy metals more efficiently if the solution was slightly acidic.

Ozsoy's group also found that within 24 hours of contact, the peanut shells could adsorb as much as 80 percent of the copper ions in solution, approximately four times the amount adsorbed by the sawdust in the same time period. When the period of contact was extended to a week, they found that 95 percent of the copper ions in solution were adsorbed by the peanut shells, compared to just 45 percent for the sawdust.

If these numbers can be replicated in large-scale use, the process could serve as an effective first step in treating wastewater laced with heavy copper residue concentrations, reducing the damage these residues can do both to marine ecosystems and human health.

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

Have A Healthy Holiday Season!



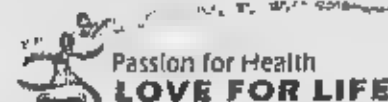
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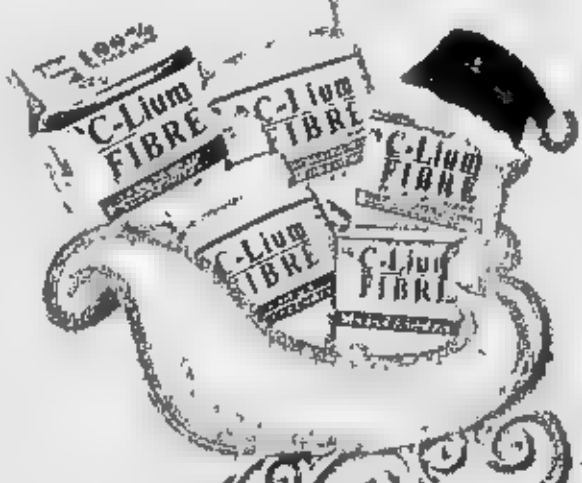
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SciSCOPE

Pain medicine fellowship at St. Luke's

THE ST LUKE'S MEDICAL CENTER PAIN Management Center has announced that Fellowship in Pain Medicine (January 2008 to December 2009) is open for application.

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relatives and friends remember

Deanna R. Buncio

(April 10, 1971 - December 8, 2007)

on her 4th year of passage to eternal life

Masses for her eternal happiness are offered today,
December 8, 2007 at the following churches:

Immaculate Conception Cathedral Parish Lantana St., Cubao, Q.C.	7:15 AM 9:15 AM 11:00 AM	4:45 PM
Christ the King E. Rodriguez Avenue, Q.C.	7:00 AM 11:30 AM	6:00 PM
Mount Carmel Shrine New Manila, Q.C.	6:00 AM 9:45 AM	12:15 NN 7:30 PM
Parish of the Holy Sacrifice U.P., Diliman, Q.C.	6:00 AM 8:00 AM	12:00 NN
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Kamuning, Q.C.	8:00 AM	12:15 NN 8:00 PM
Stn. Maria della Strada Katipunan Road, Q.C.	6:00 AM 12:00 NN	8:00 PM

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of Navotas City and Alabang, Muntinlupa

UP Medicine Class 1948

Past President, Philippine Obstetrics and Gynecological Society

Former Assistant Dean, FEU-NRMF College of Medicine

Professor Emeritus, FEU-NRMF Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 5, 2007 at the age of 83.

His loving wife Lucina Consunji Mateo; children and grandchildren Nina & Jun Fua, with Dennis, Celine & David Palter, and Cristina; Monette & Willie Barreiro, with Mikki & Dindo Santos, and Gabby; Chao & Gary Sevilla, with Kino; Toby & Monsy Adriano with Isa and Miqui; great-grandchild Sammy Santos; siblings Manuel (t), Serafin (t), Rosalina, Sr. Carmencita, Mariano (t), German, Sr. Carmela, and Rogelio (t); brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Bonifacio Chapel, La Funeraria Paz, Sucat, Parañaque.

He will be cremated on Sunday, December 9, 2007 at 2 p.m., after the Holy Mass at 12 noon.

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."—2 Corinthians 5:4-5

GEORGE QUE PHI CHIM

May 8, 1912 - December 4, 2007

Peacefully joined his Creator and his wife
Elizabeth at the age of 96.

His bereaved children Alexander (t), Eleanor (t), Anthony, Linda and Daniel (t); children-in-law, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, other relatives and friends requests the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Faith Chapel, Arlington Memorial Chapels, #12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Monday, December 10, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. at the Ever Memorial Park, Lawang Bato, Valenzuela City.

(Please omit flowers)

Isidra Adorable - Constantino

Joined her Creator on December 06, 2007 at the age of 94

She will be missed by her children, Mary, Francis & Joy, sisters & brothers Raquel Adorable-Alendado, Antonio & Violeta Adorable, Jose & Denigna Adorable-Zolena, grandchildren, nephews & nieces.

Her body lies in state at Our Lady of Beautiful Love, Merville Church, Parañaque. Final interment on December 08, 2007 at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Parañaque after the 2:00 PM mass.

EXEQUIEL "IKE" LOPEZ DAVID

April 10, 1951 - November 5, 2007

Seattle, Washington, USA

Peacefully joined his Creator at the age of 48

His mother Nema, father Col. David M. David (t); daughter Alexa; siblings Manny Boy, Merchu, Marlier, Marissa; in-laws Susan, Ernie, Arnold; nephews and nieces request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His ashes lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe, Makati.

Interment will be on December 09, 2007 (Sunday), 9:30 am at The Pavilion, The Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

CLASSIFIEDS



Home Guaranty Corporation

Office of the President

NOTICE OF SALE

The Home Guaranty Corporation is offering for sale the following properties.

	PROPERTY LOCATION	BLOCK	LOT	LOT / H&L	LOT AREA	PRICE	DESCRIPTION
1	Victoria Valley Subdivision, Cainta, Rizal	1	3	Lot only	804	707,520.00	vacant lot
2	Victoria Valley Subdivision, Cainta, Rizal	1	7	Lot only	1,975	1,738,880.00	vacant lot
3	Victoria Valley Subdivision, Antipolo City		20	Lot only	256	281,600.00	irregular lot
4	Victoria Valley Subdivision, Antipolo City		21	Lot only	131	144,100.00	irregular lot
	Total				3,167	2,872,100.00	

INTERESTED PARTIES MAY CALL ASSET MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSITION GROUP AT 897-32-86 OR 897-32-90 OR VISIT THE HEAD OFFICE AT JADE BUILDING, NO. 335 SEN. GIL PUYAT AVENUE, MAKATI CITY.

(Sgd.) RAFAEL P. DELOS SANTOS
VICE PRESIDENT
ASSET MANAGEMENT AND
DISPOSITION GROUP

(PDI-Deo. 8 & 9, 2007)

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(PDI - December 8, 2007)



Home Guaranty Corporation

Office of the President

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) is inviting interested parties to submit separate proposals for the disposition of the two projects described under a joint venture arrangement:

MARGARITA EAST VILLE			MARGARITA PLAZA		
C. Lawis St., Brgy. San Isidro, Antipolo City			Scouts Lambaga, Rallos & Ybardolaza, Brgy. Sacred Heart, Quezon City		
Area (sq.m.)	Value of the Property	HGC's Guaranteed Share	Area (sq.m.)	Value of the Property	HGC's Guaranteed Share
House & Lot	3,959	44,396,000.00			
Lot only	3,564	11,058,000.00	2,366	50,882,000.00	
TOTAL	7,523	55,454,000.00	2,366	50,882,000.00	

Payment of HGC's guaranteed share must not exceed a maximum of three (3) years.

Bidders are advised to inspect the subject properties to determine their actual conditions. For each project, bidding documents can be obtained from the HGC's Asset Management Department (AMD) at Jade Building (4th Floor), 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City upon payment of a non-refundable fee of TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P 25,000.00) from December 17 to 28, 2007. For further inquiries please call the AMD at tel. nos. 897-3286 & 897-3290 or visit the HGC office at Jade Building, 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

THE CORPORATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL OFFERS AND TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR TO ACCEPT SUCH OFFERS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CORPORATION.

(Sgd.) ATTY. DANILO C. JAVIER
Chairman
Asset Disposition Committee

(PDI - December 8 & 15, 2007)



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(PDI - December 8 & 9, 2007)

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* Please submit resume with 2x2 photo to mandaluyong@yahoo.com
or to the MEM, Guard on Duty at B. Enriquez St., Brgy. Vergara,
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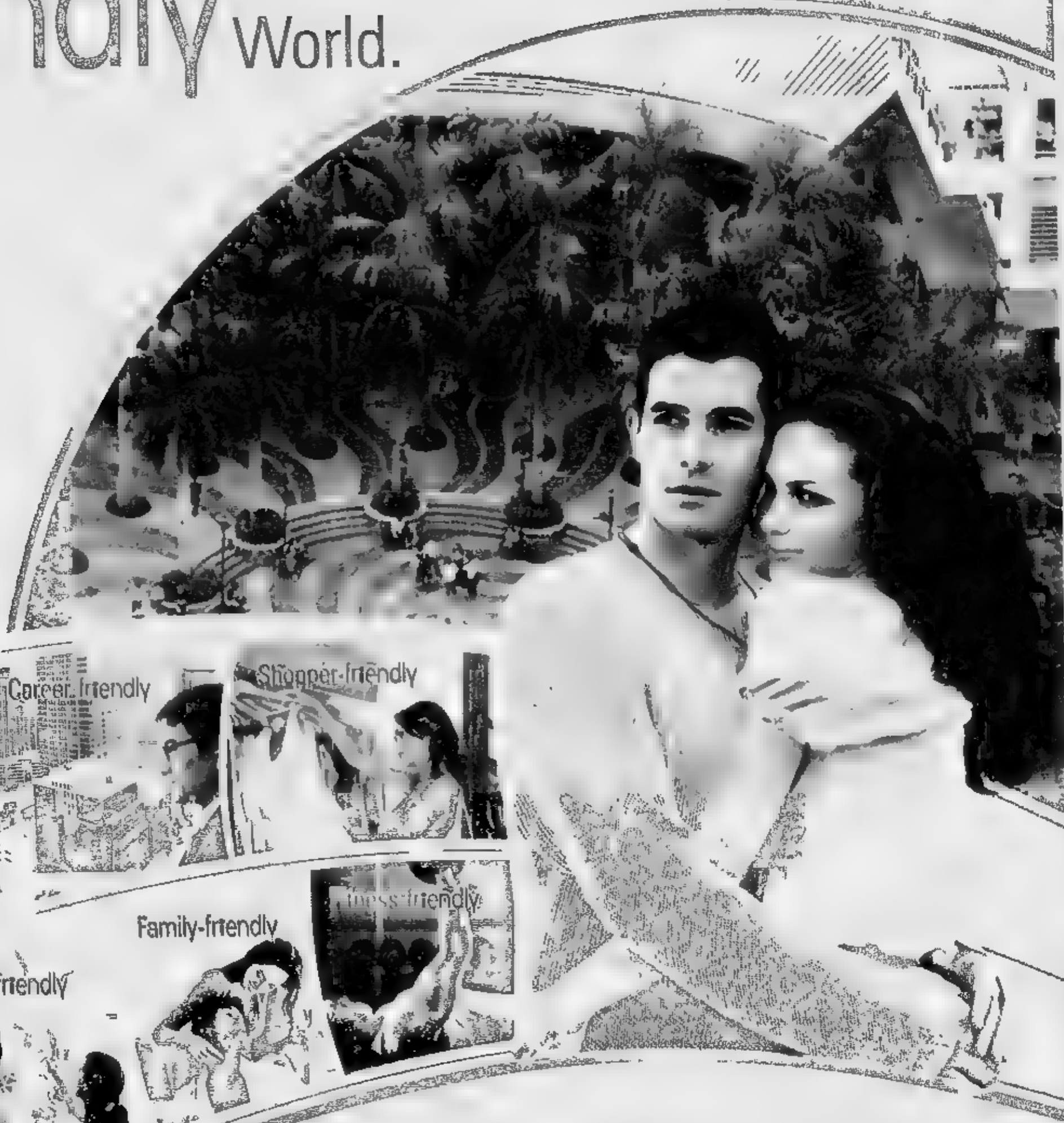
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PROPERTY

Problem with overzealous property agents? Use online tools

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE COMPETITION HAS become fierce. So much so that some "overly aggressive" entities promise the sun and the moon just to snatch that sweet, sweet deal from overseas buyers. Philippine property advocates are now sounding the alarm that complaints from "helpless property buyers from overseas are on the rise."

Philippine Voyager website in its recent issue "Should you buy properties in the Philippines or rent first?" has observed that many expatriates and foreigners have been lured into buying properties in the Philippines by aggressive real estate companies, and that most of these investors would readily believe the words of the agents. It explained that these agents are believable "mainly because they're either relatives or close friends who are armed with the information."

Complaints

Soon after investors put their money in, the complaints follow. Some com-

Helpless property buyers from overseas are on the rise

mon complaints Philippine Voyager has taken note of are the poor quality of construction; the property is situated too far from other establishments like schools, hospitals and malls; unreasonable home association and maintenance fees; and a number of other pertinent information that were either withheld or not explained properly during the selling process. These complaints have many times led to investors moving back to their respective countries.

"There are also numerous occasions where the bank had already foreclosed on the property and would have many liens against it. Buying these foreclosed properties could be a nightmare to would-be investors because it could tie them up in legal proceedings for a long time."

Eric Soriano, who has been in the property sector for 21 years, has likewise observed that the number of

complaints has swelled. "Close to a hundred high rises and easily 50 horizontal developments are slated for completion anytime between now and 2010, so we see a dire situation for potentially thousands of hopeless primary users."

He also observed the numerous complaints of poor build quality and near-zero customer service. "And they (agents) use our laws and their influence as their shield against grieving homebuyers."

Soriano is advocating for best practices and educating consumers and players on the need to raise the bar insofar as service and quality is concerned. He also said that "it is also the best time to be unkind to developers and agents that have completely abandoned the concept of value for money."

Prince Christian R. Cruz, senior economist, Global Property Guide (www.globalpropertyguide.com), "it is not only expats and overseas buyers who buy without researching, a lot of buyers—even in the Philippines—tend to buy (almost like they were) blindfolded."

Cruz cited several reasons for this:

some buyers were too busy to bother about the details, while others were intimidated by the legal gobbledegook in the sales contract.

Online tools

"The problem is exacerbated for overseas buyers. However, there are online tools that can help the buyer in checking the different aspects of the property investment."

1 The buyer must check with the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (<http://www.hlrub.gov.ph/>) if the seller or developer has a License to Sell and/or Development Permit. The license must be current and for the specific condominium or subdivision that they are selling. It also has a list of registered real estate brokers, companies and salesmen.

2 The buyer can use Google Earth (<http://earth.google.com/>) to check the location of the condominium or subdivision. Most location maps provided by developers are disproportionately inaccurate. They highlight key locations to create an impression that they are much closer to the subdivision or condominium. In

Google Earth, the buyer can check the actual distance and accessibility of the development.

3 The buyer can also check websites of other real estate firms to check the prices of nearby properties. For instance, www.condo.com.ph has listings of condominiums for sale and for rent. The information is useful especially if the buyer intends to rent out the property.

4 The buyer can also ask banks regarding foreclosed properties. Banks tend to provide more accurate descriptions of the status of property and prices are typically lower. They also provide information on how to get a housing loan.

5 The buyer can check the websites of various government agencies and local government units for projects and plans that may affect the property value. A good example is the website of Makati City government (<http://www.makati.gov.ph/portal/index.jsp>), it has information on schools, hospitals and churches in each and every barangay (town). It also provide information on services provided by the city government.

Leading the drive to earn homebuyers' trust

By Charles E. Buban

DURING THE PAST YEARS, THE PRICE OF homes have become too expensive for many prospective homebuyers.

This is because while interest rates have fallen, the prices for land and construction materials have skyrocketed.

These factors are forcing home developers to raise their price. In a number of cases, a home developer will resort to other means like skimping on materials or workmanship, or not completing the necessary basic services (road, water, electricity, sewage) to maintain an attractive price tag.

Despite this fact, more and more Filipinos are more than willing to stretch their finances to the limit just to buy the homes of their dreams or take the bitter pill, so to speak, just to have a home that they could call their own.

Lifelong dream

"You can't blame these people—owning a home is a lifelong dream. For most Filipinos, this is their chance to change their family lives and to have something that they could pass on to their children," said Romanico Alvarez, chair of PA Alvarez Properties and Development Corp., which was recently awarded the leading developer for socialized housing in Region 4-A by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board.

Alvarez lamented that a number of these prospective homebuyers thought that the only way they could be sure with their hard-earned money is to invest with the big names in the industry. "Considering that most of these big players don't have enough number of projects that would cater to low- and medium-income homebuyers, I would advise the market to look beyond as there are so many other players out there who could deliver quality yet reasonably priced home packages," said Alvarez, whose company marks its 13th year today.

Established in 1994, PA Alvarez Properties has been slowly building its name around Laguna with its various small- and medium-scale development projects.



St. Joseph the Worker

Naming its initial project after his family's patron saint, St. Joseph the Worker, Alvarez converted a family-owned 2.3-hectare farmland into a commercial subdivision, the St. Joseph Village 1, in 1994 located in Barangay San Vicente, San Pedro, Laguna.

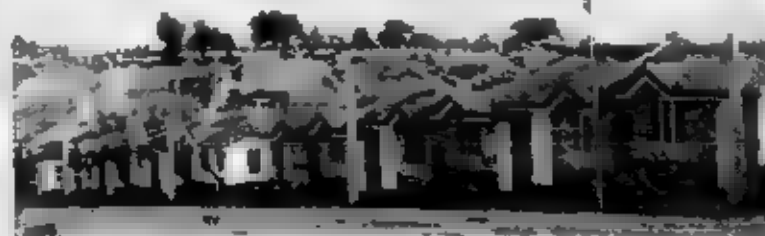
"It offered a selection of over 200 housing units that were successfully sold out in less than four months," Alvarez reported. "We realized at the time that the market is just waiting for some developer to come up with a package that is not too expensive and yet a community that is well thought of and with housing units that offer quality workmanship."

This inspired Alvarez to continue on building more communities.

At present, there are now 10 St. Joseph Villages. The 10-hectare first phase of St. Joseph Village 10, in fact, ready to be turned over before year-end. With 1,300 units built, they were sold at prices from P425,000 to P550,000.

"Because of the demand, St. Joseph 10 is now on the second phase that will have over 400 units on its 6-hectare land area. The third phase, where some 1,000 units will be offered on a 13-hectare land area, is upcoming," shared Alvarez.

Aside from St. Joseph Villages, PA Alvarez Properties has also developed in Barandal, Calamba the Laguna Buenavista Exec Homes, which is a 27-hectare development with unit prices ranging from 495,000 to P2 million.



Another is Villa Sorteo in Carmona, Cavite, a 3-hectare community that offers 250 units with unit prices ranging from P800,000 to P1.3 million.

Inspiring

"It's very inspiring for us that there are so many Filipino homebuyers who long to have a home of their own. We are glad that a lot of them dared to look further afield to find us developers whose projects are worthy of their trust," Alvarez said.

He believes that developers, including PA Alvarez Properties, must continue to deliver to their buyers properly built homes, with complete amenities, and reasonably priced home packages to earn trust from their market.

"Besides, developers like us should play a more active role in helping the country reduce its housing backlog that now stands at 1.4 million. I strongly believe that this could only be done if developers invest more in small- and medium-size developments like what we have been doing for the past 13 years," Alvarez said.

ALVAREZ said he is proud to be among the developers that are able to provide quality housing packages to buyers no matter how low or how high their budget may be.

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AWESOME STRUCTURES

By Emman Cerna

The Crooked House

FOR THE RECORD, THE DANCING House (in Czech Republic) is not alone in the department of the higgledy-piggledy constructed buildings. Actually there's a lot more structures which defied the convention, edifices put up out of man's creative and playful minds.

Though it looks like something out of a surrealist painting or a Disney cartoon, a real building known as Krzywy Domek (or the "Crooked House") is hot to the eyes of passersby

and tourists in Sopot, Poland.

The Crooked House is considered to be the most photographed object in the city with its luscious curves topped with a roof of blue-green enameled shingles designed to give the impression of dragon scales. It also has colorful stained glass entrances, stone elevation details and windows framed with sandstone.

Filled with shops, bars and cafés, the 4,000-square-meter building is a certified tourist-drawer. So if you happen to pass by the strip of Rezydent shopping center, don't forget to make your best pose and get your souvenir photos at the famous Crooked House.

The house, which opened in 2004, was designed by Polish architect Szotyścy Zaleski, who was believed to have been inspired by the fairytale illustrations of Jan Marcin Szancer and the drawings of the Swedish artist and Sopot resident Per Dahlberg. Its construction began in January 2003 and took a year to finish.

References:
<http://www.lifestyle13.com>,
<http://www.inyourpocket.com>



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GA Sky Suites' embarks on landmark campaign

The new Globe Asiatique Sky Suites TV commercial defines the GA lifestyle.

It seemed that it was just a while when we saw the three-day smashing grand launch of a brave new landmark, the GA Sky Suites.

Credit that to Globe Asiatique, one of the country's reliable and pioneering real estate developers.

Envisioned to be a landmark in the league of the famous towers in the world, GA Sky Suites would rise at the corner of the metropolis' two major thoroughfares—Edsa and Quezon Avenue—boasting a bio-friendly sky garden, a high-tech corporate tower and a posh residential building.

Now, the GA Sky Suites would be treading on another groundbreaking endeavor, a print and TV campaign which would showcase the kind of lifestyle one would have in a place which you can truly call home.

Divine Lee, vice president for international sales and marketing of Globe Asiatique, the developer of GA Sky Suites, shares that all real estate campaigns both in print and television always convey images of happy faces of families and amenities of the project. She says that since what will soon rise is a landmark, they believe that their campaign should also be something of a different scale.

"This new campaign would surely make people think and imagine what kind of life they would have because we would be showing the kind of lifestyle GA Sky Suites offers," she notes.

Lee adds that in the TV commercial, they would relate the idea that you don't have to be stuck in the usual condos.

"We know that your home affects everything in your life, including your work. At GA Sky Suites, what we're offering is a lifestyle, a home which one can essentially call a home and not a four-corner room with nothing but walls. We wanted to convey the idea that condos are not places which you would go to just to sleep."

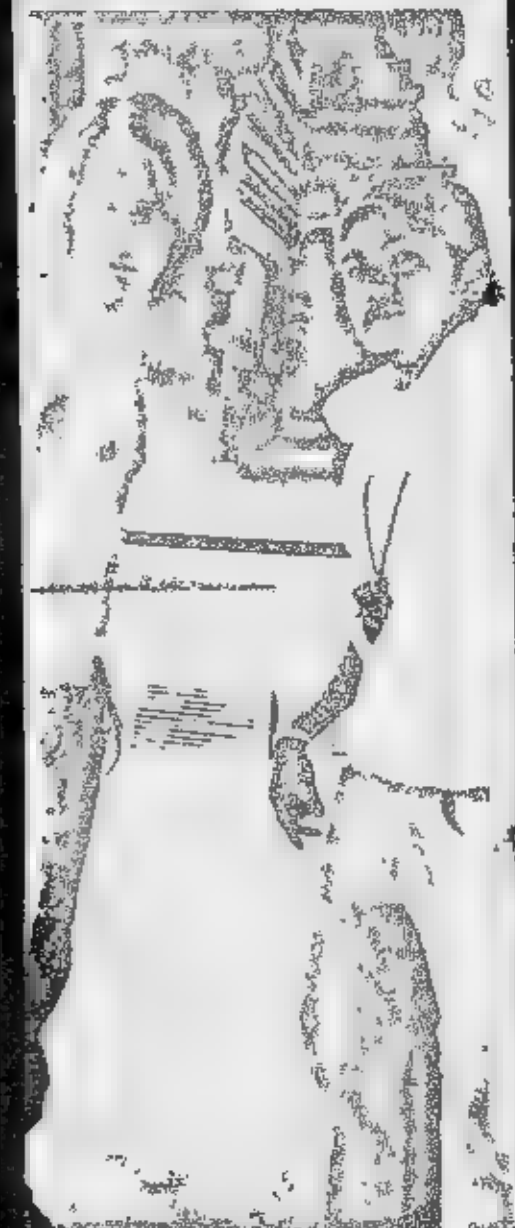
Lee says that the project is a product of first-hand knowledge of the needs of people whom Globe Asiatique has been dealing with throughout the years. It's also a "conception" of young, dynamic and talented young team of Globe Asiatique led by Lee who hopes to make a mark by creating something novel.

"It's a lifestyle that we're offering, not just mere space," she stresses.

Lee adds that they are coming up with a TV



Last minute touches from stylist Charmaine Palermo.



Taking his cue from the director.



Models talk about their scene.

campaign that is out of ordinary since "it is part of thinking out of the box."

"We just don't want to follow what the others are doing. We'd rather take risks and experiment on new things. We know that starting a trend best suit Globe Asiatique," Lee explains.

The TV campaign will be released towards the end of this month.

A glass statue at night

GA Sky Suites will be built out of concrete, glass and steel, a soaring edifice described as bioclimatic is a modern building well ahead of its time. Divided into two main structures—a semi-circular residential building and a curvilinear corporate tower—each unit provides breathtaking views of its surrounding areas. The architectural work of art, a seamless fusion of style and function, also features four loft styles—the podium loft, garden loft, sky loft and penthouse.

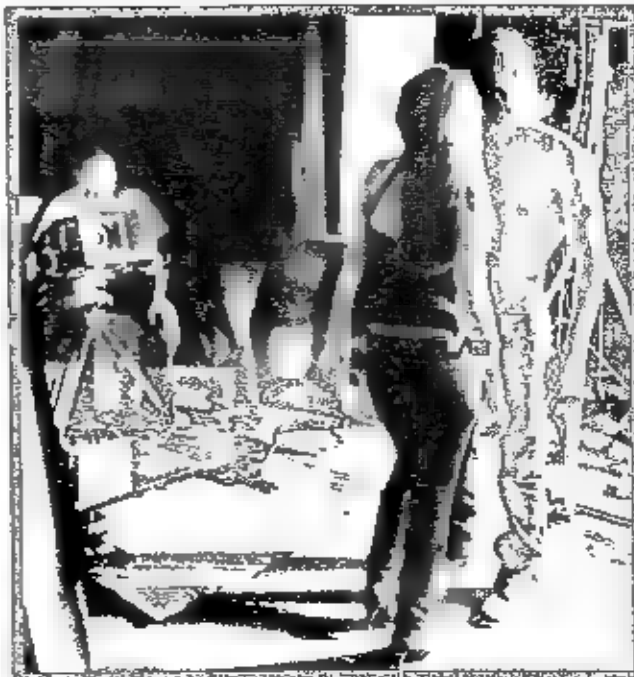
The two-floor commercial area can be found at the podium with various stores, service outlets, restaurants and other dining areas to cater to the residents' needs. The 25-story corporate tower, which boasts of prime office space, is strategically located next to the residential building for easy access and convenience.

GA Sky Suites is also angled to avoid the sun's direct rays but nonetheless allows natural light to come in, perfect for seeing the sights on lazy afternoons. It is a glass statue which would radiantly glow at night. Witness the setting of the sun and the moonlit night with your very own front seat in the sky.

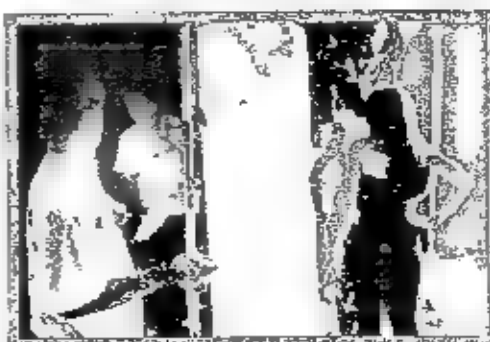
"A home should be a sanctuary where you can truly have a choice," Lee concludes as she sums up the concept of GA Sky Suites' new campaign.



All prepped up and ready, models are briefed for the final frame.



Let's get the film rolling!



All eyes and ears on Director Paul Basinilio.



Taking a closer look at the final scene of the GA Sky Suites TV commercial.

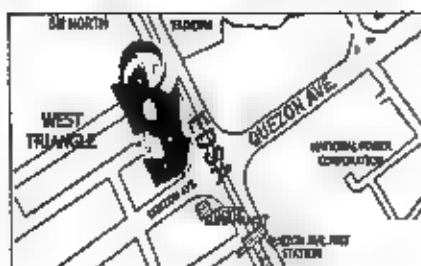


Director Paul Basinilio, the GA Sky Suites Models, and Globe Asiatique VP for Sales and Marketing Divine Lee



Marketing Executive Eah Medina, Globe Asiatique VP for Sales and Marketing Divine Lee, and Marketing Executive Ther Ortiz

www.gaskysuites.com



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PROPERTY

Smart lighting

IN THE PAST DECADES, THE dwindling supply of energy did not loom as a serious problem. We seemed to have such an abundance that we became so dependent on it, to the point that some people have abused it, thinking that it could never run out. Now, we are forced to think again. We are beginning to feel the pinch with the high cost of energy generation and the adverse effect of actions we had always thought harmless.

The norm was that as long as we could afford to shoulder the cost, then it was ok for us to use as much electricity as we wanted. I believe it's time to reorient our way of thinking. There are two facts we should acknowledge. First of all, the supply of fossil fuel does run out. Secondly, its untoward use adversely affects our environment, giving rise to the specter of global warming.

Practicing smart lighting

However, with judicious use of electrical power, we can contribute effectively to preserving our ecosystem and promoting sustainability. To this end, here are some ways to practice smart lighting

in our homes.

- **Make an honest effort to find out which lights in your home you do not really need or use infrequently.** See if you can replace them with more energy-efficient fixtures. There are many low-wattage lighting fixtures in the market with better illuminating power. These likewise produce less heat.

- **Limit the use of lights used only for esthetic effect to those times or occasions when they will be most appreciated although you need not remove them.** Try to identify which of them are practical enough to serve as ambient lighting at night. Most of the time, this type of lighting is situated on hallways, foyers, stairwells, porches and garages. Often, these areas require light only sufficient for walking. At times, instead of having one bright light in the ceiling, an interesting wall lamp or an indirect light that merely casts a "glow" effect will suffice.

- **Avoid glare.** Unequal distribution of light may not be comfortable in a particular room. Indirect lighting is a type of system wherein you achieve illumination without seeing the light source, thus

LIVING ARCHITECTURE

Marcos de Guzman Jr.



avoiding glare. With this type of lighting, you need not have very bright rooms and still achieve a pleasing effect. In this case, you may use low-wattage lamps throughout your home and switch to bright lights only in reading and working areas or as needed. This can translate to a more relaxing atmosphere.

- **Have a common activity area.** Light-intensive activities can be done in a common area that many can share simultaneously, rather than in individual rooms. This way you only need a few lights for everyone. Instead of having to light a corner of his bedroom, dad could probably read his favorite book on a couch in the same place where the kids are doing their assignments. If at all possible, make use of daylight through wide windows, skylights and vents.

- **Practice smart/surgical lighting.** It is not reducing the number of fixtures in the house that is really important. It is managing their use that is crucial. Having only one light fixture in the middle of a room does not necessarily mean lower electric bills. It is better to have a task light for reading or other concentrated activity and dispensable lights that turn on and off automatically as needed, such as inside closets and cabinets. In this way, your light source is closer to the task at hand, thereby optimizing the use of electric power.

- **When having your house designed, list down your requirements and give them to your architect.** Have a furniture and activity layout set even before planning your lighting system. Identify which areas must be bright. You should ask for designs for three different lighting levels, for normal everyday use, for special events like parties, and for security or area lights which you can leave on all night. Do not hesitate to ask your architect to explain your lighting system, including its effect and practicality.

- **Make use of available gadgets in the market that may help you manage**

your lighting more effectively. These include dimmer switches and motion sensor switches, which reduce the length of time your perimeter lamps stay on since they will only activate when they detect motion within a certain range or at a certain time. This gives the perception that there are people inside the house who are still awake and alert. Automatic switches which are activated when opening and closing a door are very practical for storage rooms and closets. Some energy is wasted when lights are left on in these rooms accidentally. Fortunately, this kind of switch is cheaper than the regular one.

It may be high time to evaluate your lighting system if you have not done so yet. You may be able to reduce your energy consumption by more than 50 percent, reduce heat emissions in the process, and end up with more dramatic lighting effect. And don't forget the best tip of all: compared to the most sparkly Christmas lights, a sincere smile always shines brighter.

For your comments, e-mail to marcosdeguzman@yahoo.com.

Exploring Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie house

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT HAS ALWAYS been one of my favorite architects. The designs he conceived in the early 1900s when the use of concrete and masonry was new technology, were way ahead of their time. I first saw some of his work in old design magazines when I was still exploring the possibility of a design course for university, and marveled at how he managed to play with volumes of masses in the exterior in ways unlike any of his contemporaries could.

A visit to Wright's Robie house in Hyde Park, Chicago, was one of the highlights of my recent visit to this architecturally diverse community. The Robie house was completed in 1909 and is considered one of the best examples of Prairie style architecture. Prairie style was influenced by the American Midwest and characterized by horizontality—volumes that seemed to crouch down low and close to the ground rather than rise from it, as did the flat and expansive prairie landscape itself. Wright expressed this through the floating volumes, suppressed chimneys, low and widely sheltering roofs, horizontal brick patterns and accents.

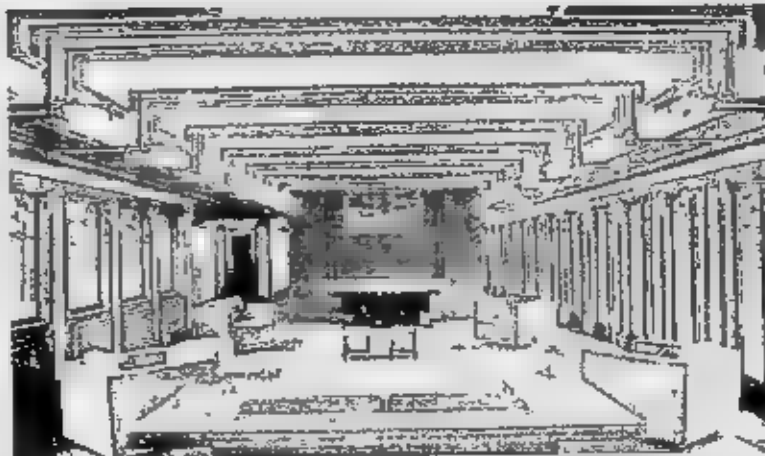
Horizontality

As I saw, the horizontality on the outside is carried through into the interior spaces. The ceilings are kept very low, especially at the ground floor foyer where it is meant to discourage guests from lingering too long. Toward the stair area, the ceilings climb a little higher to encourage movement through the stair and into the second floor areas where the main living spaces of the house are located. Up in the main living floor, rooms streamed from one area into another, having flowing rather than compartmentalized spaces.

Doors and windows had stained glass panels ornamented with prairie designs that were derived mainly from traditional Native American patterns. Furniture is streamlined and devoid of any ornamentation, much unlike the classic European pieces so popular in the American Victorian homes of that era. Their lines were very geometric, emulating the contemporary lines of the architecture.

Interesting features

There are some features that are quite interesting in the interiors. The woodwork pat-



THE MAIN living room of the Robie house, where wall and ceiling elements fuse into one

terns on the walls climb onto the ceilings, thereby defining the planes as one element all together. This was a new concept at that time when planes were defined as separate design elements. In the living room, ceilings have recessed lighting covered with fretwork and a blue glass panel. This light was meant to be used at night. Its effect was a bluish glow, much like the light cast by a full moon!

The other light fixtures, meant to be used during the daytime, are round balls of glass with incandescent bulbs inside, that shone a bright light that emulates sunlight. This was something about Wright's work that I never read in the books, the concept of having arti-

ficial daylight and night light.

Patches of paint

As we walked through the rooms, patches of paint were being tested on the walls and ceilings. Again, another surprise: whereas published photos of the Robie house showed white walls, the original colors were in hues of earth colors: the ceiling was in a sand tone and walls were in an earthy salmon. Wright's original intent was to bring the warm colors of the exterior—the terra cotta shades of the brick and the sand-colored accent bands—into the inside.

Our guide explained that since its restoration project started a few years back, the University of Chicago that now owns the Robie house, has been striving to be faithful to Wright's original design of the house. Unseen to the naked eye was the full integration of all the utility systems—heating, cooling, plumbing and electrical work—into the home, so that all the provisions were properly designed into the other elements of the house interiors.

Wright once said that architecture and design are "the triumph of human imagination over materials, methods and men, to put man into possession of his own earth." At the Robie house, he clearly practiced what he preached.

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Chinatrust

The dining room implies family harmony, wealth

By Tess S. Samaniego

AS THE HOLIDAYS DRAW NEAR, Filipinos are kept busy not only with gift giving but also with feasts and get-togethers.

In the case of family gatherings, it is the dining room which gets all spruced up as it becomes the heart of the house during those festive, celebrated moments.

Normally, a dining room is probably one of the most intimate rooms in a house where the family shares over a meal their most serious conversations as well as their lightest moments.

For a typically busy family, a dining room would be the best place for members to update each other about their plans and lives.

According to Kathryn Weber, publisher of the Red Lotus Letter Feng Shui E-Zine, the dining room connotes health, family harmony and wealth.

To maintain harmony and balance in your dining room, especially during this season, let me share with you some feng shui dos and don'ts to make your dining experience more pleasurable and enjoyable.

- **Display your china and crystal.** The dining room is a place of wealth, so it is always auspicious to display your family crystal, china, or silver. It is also wise to consider adding mirrors to the back of a china cabinet to "double" the amount of crystal and china you have.

- **Have bright, beautiful lighting.** A stunning, fine-looking chandelier is a wonderful addition to the dining room. If yours isn't bright enough or attractive to you, replace it with another fixture. Lighting is very auspicious.

- **Hang mirrors here.** Mirrors are stimulating and they double the good times by doubling the food and company in the room.

- **Keep the dining room private.** Avoid having the dining room seen from the front door. This can cause a loss of wealth.

- **Take clocks out of the dining room.** Keep in mind that the passage of time is not important while you are enjoying a



DINING room, the heart of every family's home.

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good meal in the company of those closest to you.

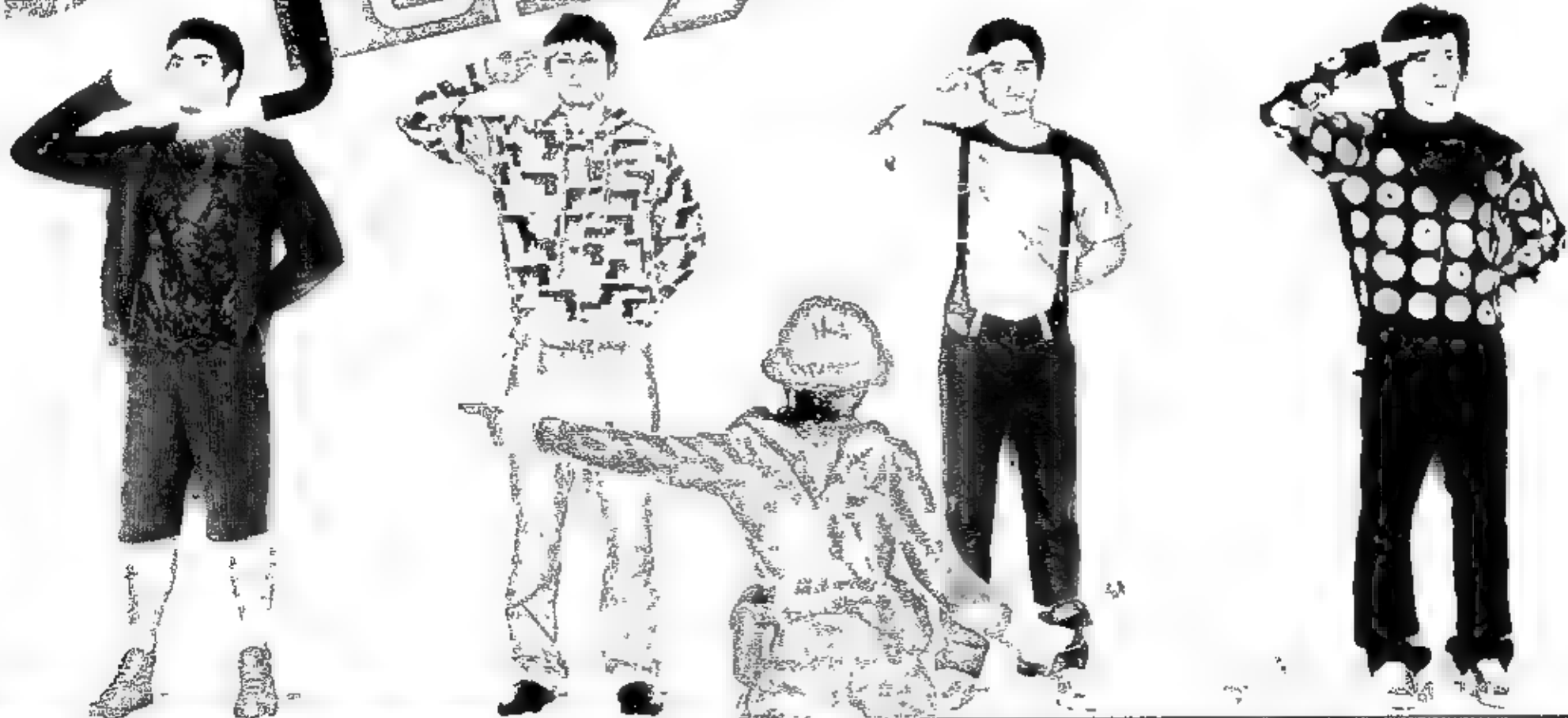
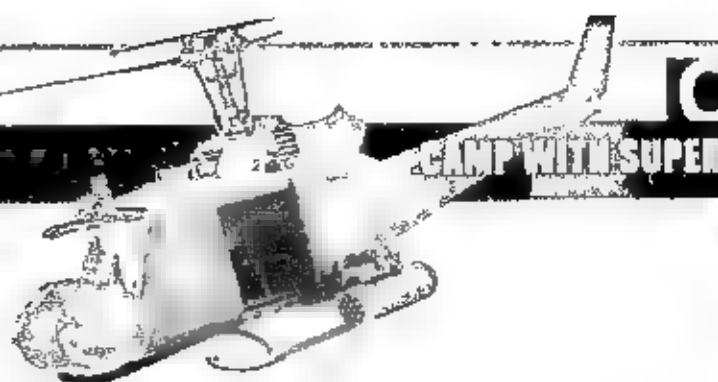
- **Don't eat with the dead.** This seems obvious, yet many people have pictures of deceased relatives in the dining room. Worse yet, are urns of ashes of loved ones! Avoid doing this because it creates an extremely yin dining experience and that can create health problems and strain good family relationships.

- **Don't eat with animals.** In the dining room, it's better not to have animals—real or otherwise. If you have pictures of birds or statues of animals, better remove them and put it in another location. Animals symbolically eat your food.

- **Don't display sad art.** Remove sad images since dining with your family should be a fun and happy experience. Everyone should be happy at the dining table.

Since the dining room is almost always the most beautiful room in the house, complete with gleaming silver, sparkling crystal and beautiful chandeliers and furnishings, it is wise to always remember that the dining room's most important feng shui element is to actually dine there.

(Source: www.redlotusconsulting.com)



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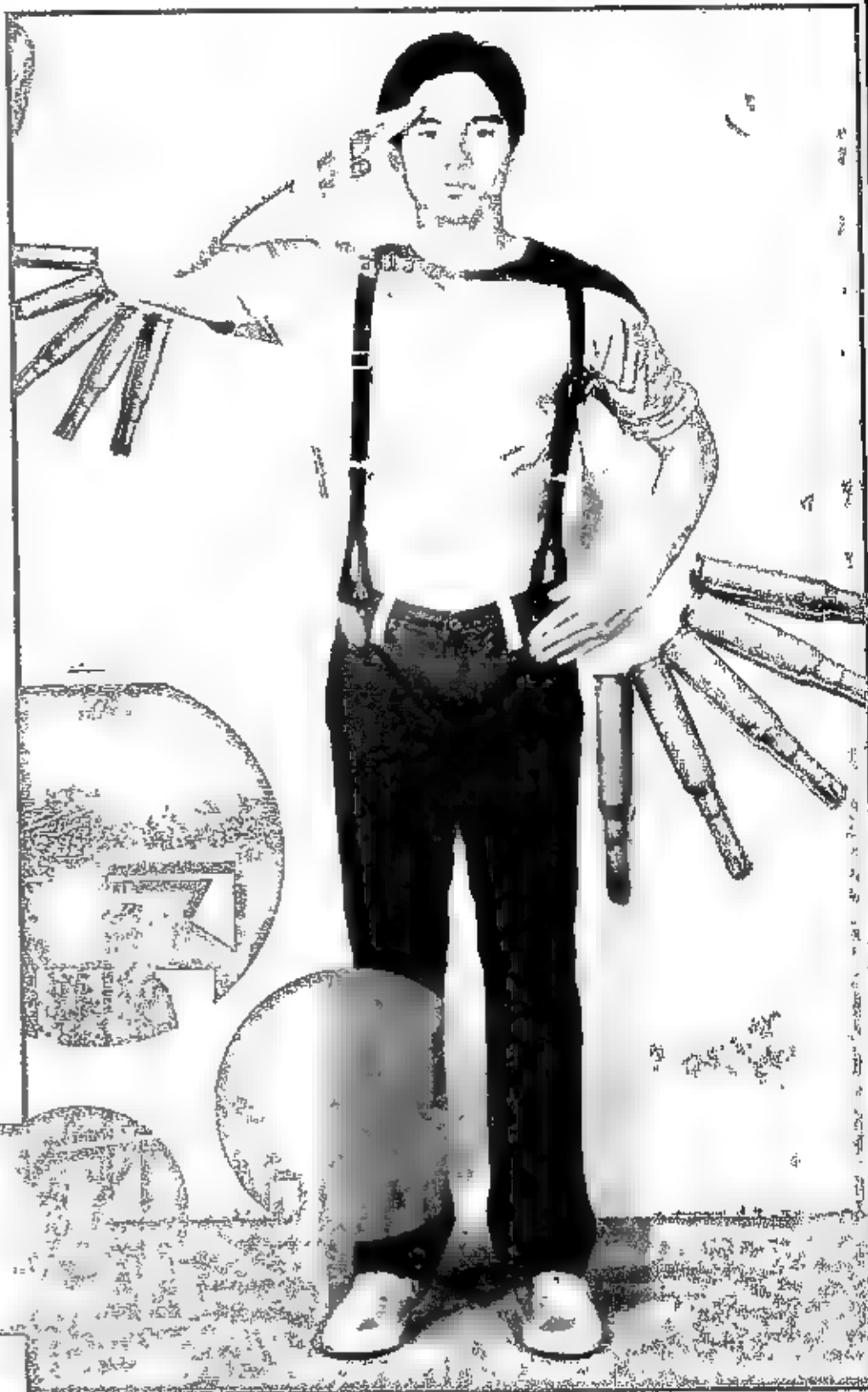
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NEVER ENDING GREY SHIRT BY THEODORE'S
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ON HARRY:
BLACK COTTON PANTS BY STITCH
BLACK SHIRT WITH CRYSTAL DETAIL BY DE PUTA MADRE
SWISS EYES HOODIE BY KID ROBOT



OW Philippines

IT'S GOOD TO KNOW THAT in times of national crisis, we haven't lost concern for our fellow men. Testament to this is the slew of anxious text messages I received on the day of the coup now officially dubbed in Wikipedia as "The Manila Peninsula Mutiny." Here's a brief rundown of the texts from those bastions of patriotism.

"On my God curfew! We're in Victoria Court for a bachelorette party. Our strippers are stressed. They wanna go home!"

"Kaya palang lakarin ang Manila Peninsula sa Makati Regional Court."

"Ces Drilon has a very Blair Witch Project style of reporting. Minus the snot. And what's with the leopard print headband?"

"Pas-coup na naman!"

"That was the GAYEST coup attempt EVARR. Pity those tourists in the Manila Pen. First the earthquake, then the typhoon, now this. Welcome to Manila, beyotchies!"

"Yay! National crisis is over! Come to the lack off party!"

"Marc Nelson is so hot. Yan ang Wow Philippines!"

Now that is what I call a bourgeois revolution. Is it any wonder why no one marched to Edsa?



for The Marc, who should add "Carabao Whisperer" to his growing resume. It wasn't that easy for the rest, though, because our indigenous carabaos were secretly trained to listen only to Pinoys, and Marc Nelson. It was not the best moment either for Sophie from Hong Kong, whose carabao had digestive problems and fertilized the soil near her foot. Crap-tastic!

Feeding frenzy

Next challenge! Take the bus. Which is a really easy task in most other cities, but a challenge in ours because once in a while, the bus stops in the middle of the highway, and the half-naked driver will go under the bus to singlehandedly fix the problem. The female racers from Malaysia were freaking out at this point, in spite of the peaceful, indifferent and uncomplaining passengers inside the bus who are just so used to crises of this nature.

"Filipinos are very resilient people," chirps Marc Nelson once again. He and Rovilson were way ahead of the pack. For their next challenge, they had to go to Star Mart to pick up boxes of donation goods and load them onto the jeepney. They headed to the Nuestra Sra. de Lusa Children's Center, to deliver the food to orphaned children. Aww, cute little things aren't they? That is, until they turned into bloodthirsty vultures on a feeding frenzy the second a box of food was thrown in their midst. Rovilson, I believe, was saying something about cherishing those heartwarming moments of giving, except he had to run away or one of those kids would have munched on his biceps.

Over to Santa Cruz, by the Carriedo LRT Station, where the racers had to choose between the task of matching 250 pairs of shoes from a messy pile, or assembling a bicycle. By this time, the teams had attracted a gaggle of ushers who were cheering them on, especially since the female racers were bent over, unaware that their ample cleavages were showing. By this time, my mobile phone had beeped with another text message:

"Shyet, nakakahiya."

You know, I had no idea what that text had referred to, the coup event or the TV show. What is the difference, anyway, in a country of a half-formed democracy, starving children, and creatures crapping all over our land, and a people so used to crises that they've grown indifferent. But chin up, folks! Take it from Marc Nelson—we Filipinos are very resilient people.

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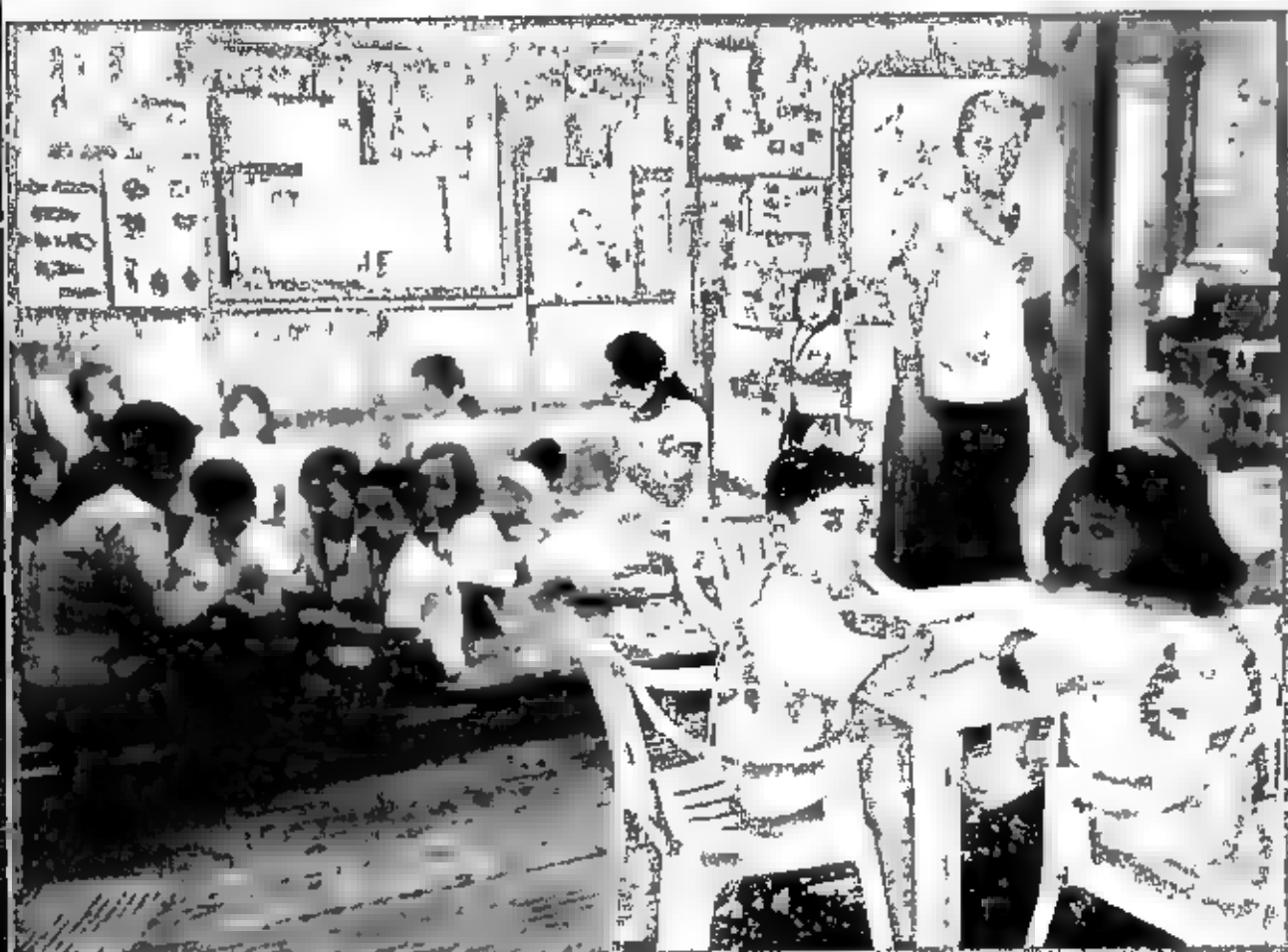
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Christmas Treasures 2007

10

Feeding a future army



HUNGER leads to the dark side

Text and photos by Katrina A. Holigores

AS PART OF THE WORK I DO for my family's foundation I took a trip recently to visit two of the projects that we have been supporting.

One of them I've taken a personal interest—it's called the Learning for Living Foundation. This foundation's main thrust is in the feeding and education of young children who come from families with little to no income.

About three years ago, I spent my birthday there and had friends and colleagues donate what they wanted. Donations included a clown act couple who volunteered their services for free to entertain the kids for the day.

During my most recent visit I was happy to see that the overall environment was still very clean, and that the children were all very well-groomed, active, and eating healthy food.

Patricia MacAuliffe, a Canadian lady who has been in charge of Learning for Living for many years, makes sure that their meals consist mainly of vegetables and fish while meat and fast food "treats" are kept to a strict minimum—which is rare for most Filipino diets.

More mouths to feed

Patricia reported that they have been increasing their enrollment and are accepting more and more children by the year.

Now the foundation is sadly lacking in funds. They do get donations, but because



NOT always child's play

of the growth in their classrooms, they are going to have to make a hard choice of turning away kids, or even parents (who attend vocational seminars at the foundation to have a sustainable livelihood), or even worse, cut down their much needed staff (teachers and caretakers).

When I asked her for a breakdown, she said that they need a minimum of P2 million a year in order to just stay afloat.

If they could get more than that in a year then they could add more vocational programs for the parents (mostly the kids' mothers) and perhaps have more food for the feeding program and even hire more teachers.

This broke my heart because they currently have nursery, kindergarten and prep classes, plus they try and maintain an "Alumni Kids Program" for the older kids who can no longer participate in the regular classes.

Without additional funds they will have to pare down many things. Right now they are taking care of about 200 children, and are hoping to still be able to keep or increase the number of enrollees (with more funding in the coming years).

Getting involved

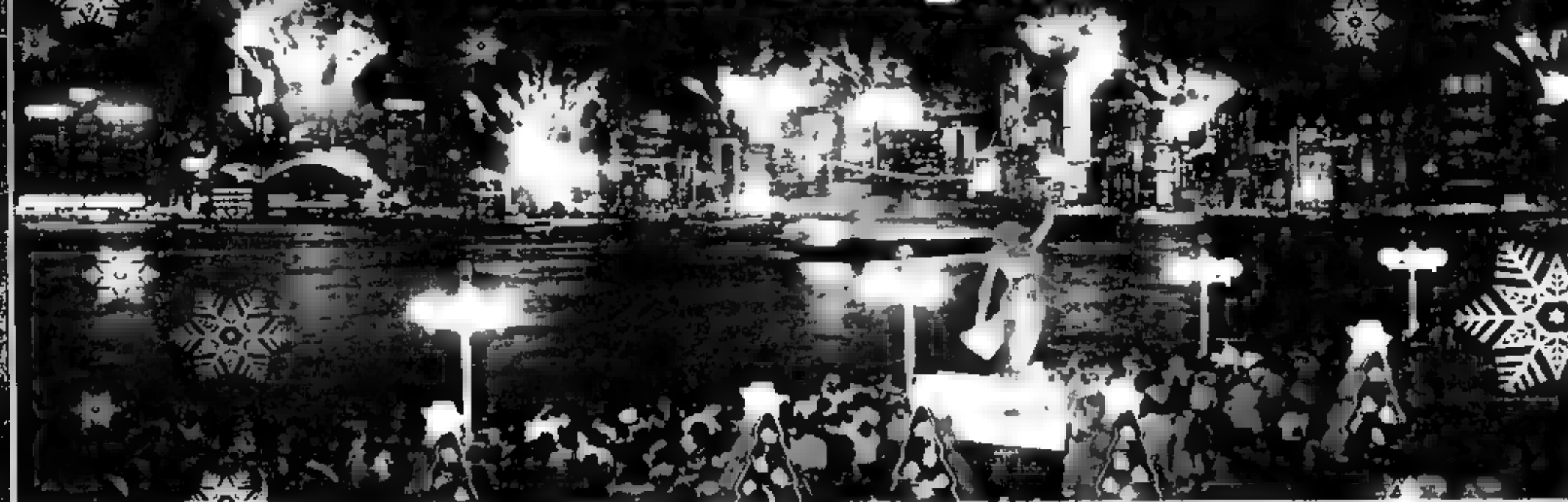
To give a quick breakdown, to keep one kid in school costs P10,000 a year, which is P833 a month. Not a lot to make a difference in a kid's (and his or her parents') life. Plus, you can be sure that you will get regular reports of where your money is going as Learning for Living can issue receipts. You can also always go and visit the facility in San Jose, Rodriguez, in Rizal to see how your donations are being put to use.

Since this is the season to spread good cheer, being able to tell others about this program will help, as money is something that they are in dire need of, for the near and far off future.

Donations can be made via their peso account: Learning for Living Foundation Inc. BPI Family Bank, account # 5843-1609-31 or through their dollar account BPI Family Bank account # 687-400-5191.

Learning for Living Foundation is located at the Tipanan House, Camia St. San Jose, Rodriguez, Rusa, Philippines. Contact them through learningforlivingph@yahoo.ca or tel. 948-4415.

Experience Hong Kong's Winter Delights



The mega-event now on its sixth consecutive year, will run until January 1, 2008. The celebration promises to be a fun-filled spectacle, transforming the city into a cheery, festive, winter wonderland. Dazzling events and activities abound, enabling everyone to enjoy the warmth and joyful celebrations in Hong Kong during the festive season.

Expect one-of-a-kind animated illuminations covering the famous skyscrapers on both side of Victoria Harbour, as well as the streets and malls that sparkle with themed decorations as the city takes on a carnival atmosphere. The city's different districts vie for attention with festive events and special surprise performances on weekends. All around town, shops spread Christmas cheer with winter sales and special offers on every kind of gift imaginable, while restaurants serve up seasonal delights, delicious food promotions and special deals for visitors.

Spectacular Festivities

Hong Kong's three key districts of Central, Causeway Bay and Tsim Sha Tsui are pulling out all the stops to offer a glittering array of exciting events and activities.

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A Holiday Experience of a Lifetime

Hong Kong is indeed one of the most exciting places to be in this coming Christmas. As the Events Capital of Asia, the city offers a dazzling array of events that are sure to put a smile on your face and enough reasons to go back for more.

Ocean Park Christmas Sensation 2007

From December 16 to January 1, Ocean Park will be transformed into a Winter Wonderland for kids and families alike! Visit the park as it becomes a stunning extravaganza of world-class Christmas attractions with celebrated ice skaters, festive and creative workshops, and a 40-foot Christmas tree, illuminating the entire plaza in an array of colors, transforming the night sky into a sea of festive sparkles. Santa and his jolly elves will also be around for photo sessions and surprises.



The true Christmas spirit comes alive at Ocean Park's snowiest event!

Disney's Sparkling Christmas

This year, Hong Kong Disneyland will bring a never-before-seen radiance to the festive season with astounding Sparkling Castle Lights, Ice Fantasy and Santa's Workshop. Every evening, an enthralling symphony will fill the air with a whirlwind of light, color and music! Guests will be able to see the extravagant Christmas Tree at Town Square and the ultra groovy "Let It Snow" Christmas Parade. The park also has over 100 Christmas-themed merchandise items to satisfy every palate and fulfill gift ideas. Disneyland's Christmas-themed attractions and entertainment will surely bring guests of all ages closer for a heartwarming season.



For more details on the Hong Kong Winterfest, please visit www.DiscoverHongKong.com

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GALLERIA MANILA

Feeding a future army

Text and photos by Katrina A. Holigores

AS PART OF THE WORK I DO for my family's foundation I took a trip recently to visit two of the projects that we have been supporting.

One of them I've taken a personal interest—it's called the Learning for Living Foundation. This foundation's main thrust is in the feeding and education of young children who come from families with little to no income.

About three years ago, I spent my birth day there and had friends and colleagues donate what they wanted. Donations included a clown act couple who volunteered their services for free to entertain the kids for the day.

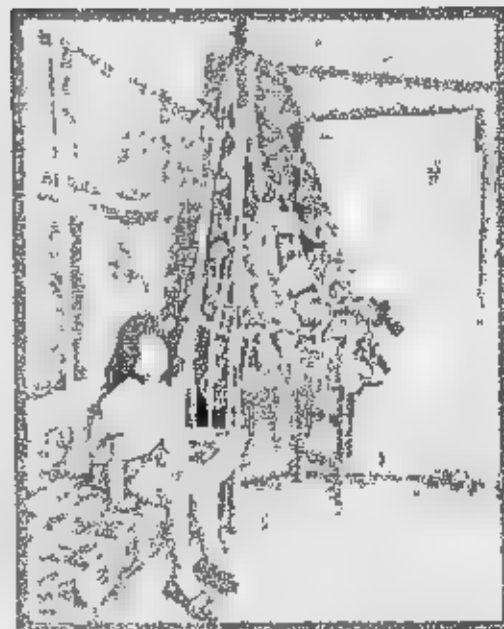
During my most recent visit I was happy to see that the overall environment was still very clean, and that the children were all very well-groomed, active, and eating healthy food.

Patricia MacAuliffe, a Canadian lady who has been in charge of Learning for Living for many years, makes sure that their meals consist mainly of vegetables and fish while meat and fast food "treats" are kept to a strict minimum—which is rare for most Filipino diets.

More mouths to feed

Patricia reported that they have been increasing their enrollment and are accepting more and more children by the year.

Now the foundation is sadly lacking in funds. They do get donations, but because



NOT always child's play

of the growth in their classrooms, they are going to have to make a hard choice of turning away kids, or even parents (who attend vocational seminars at the foundation to have a sustainable livelihood), or even worse, cut down their much needed staff (teachers and carers).

When I asked her for a breakdown, she said that they need a minimum of P2 million a year in order to just stay afloat.

If they could get more than that in a year then they could add more vocational programs for the parents (mostly the kids' mothers) and perhaps have more food for the feeding program and even hire more teachers.

This broke my heart because they currently have nursery, kindergarten and prep classes, plus they try and maintain an "Alumni Kids Program" for the older kids who can no longer participate in the regular classes.

Without additional funds they will have to pare down many things. Right now they are taking care of about 200 children, and are hoping to still be able to keep or increase the number of enrollees (with more funding in the coming years).

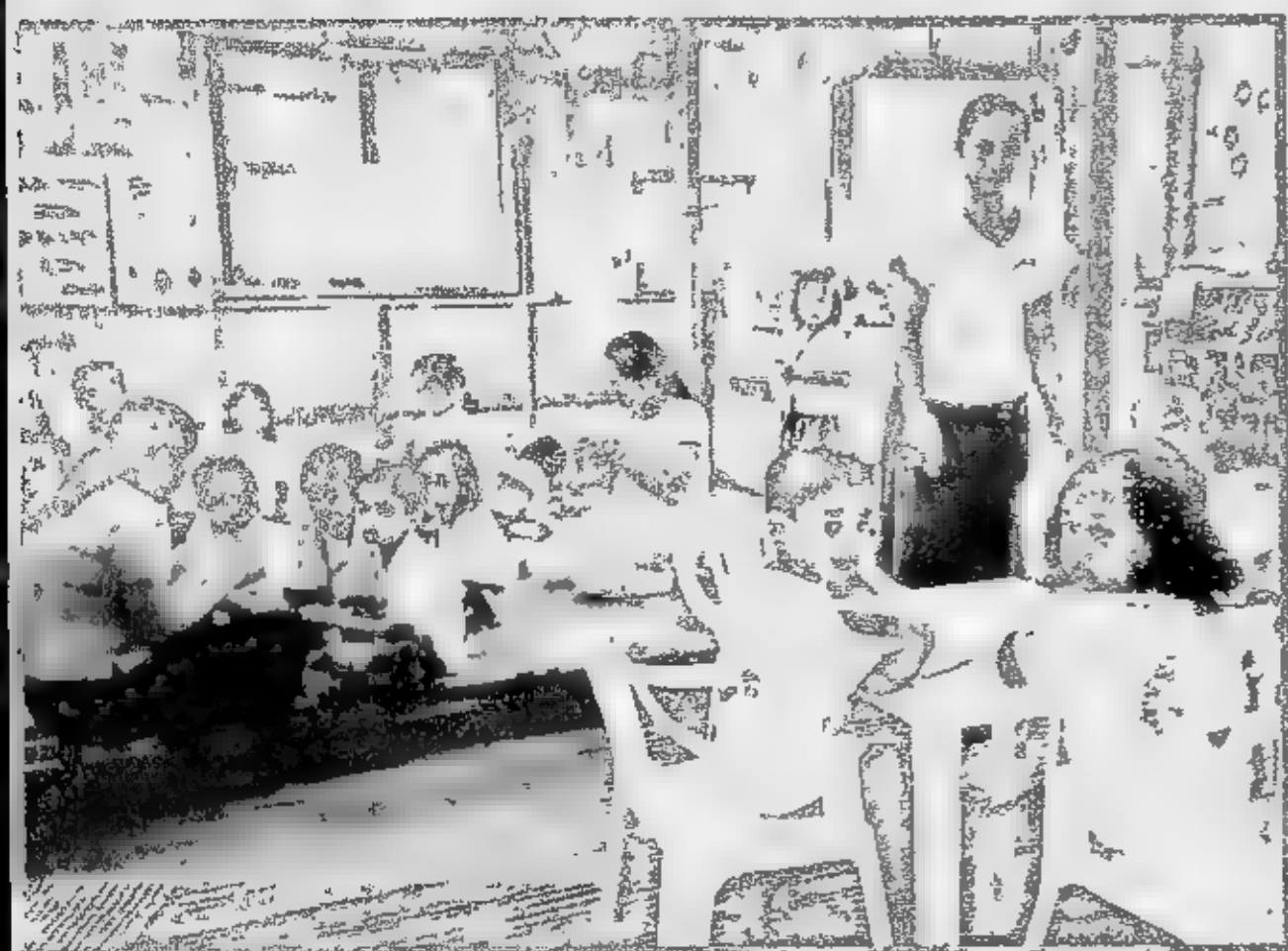
Getting involved

To give a quick breakdown, to keep one kid in school costs P10,000 a year, which is P833 a month! Not a lot to make a difference in a kid's (and his or her parents') life. Plus, you can be sure that you will get regular reports of where your money is going as Learning for Living can issue receipts. You can also always go and visit the facility in San Jose, Rodriguez, in Rizal to see how your donations are being put to use.

Since this is the season to spread good cheer, being able to tell others about this program will help, as money is something that they are in dire need of, for the near and far off future.

Donations can be made via their peso account: Learning for Living Foundation Inc. BPI Family Bank, account # 5843-1609-31 or through their dollar account BPI Family Bank account # 687 400 5191.

Learning for Living Foundation is located at the Tipanan House, Camia St San Jose, Rodriguez, Rizal, Philippines. Contact them through learningforlivingph@yahoo.ca or tel. 948-4415.



HUNGER leads to the dark side



Experience Hong Kong's Winter Delights

The mega-event, now on its sixth consecutive year, will run until January 1, 2008. The celebration promises to be a fun-filled spectacle, transforming the city into a cheery, festive, winter wonderland. Dazzling events and activities abound, enabling everyone to enjoy the warmth and joyful celebrations in Hong Kong during the festive season.

Expect one-of-a-kind animated illuminations covering the famous skyscrapers on both side of Victoria Harbour, as well as the streets and malls that sparkle with themed decorations as the city takes on a carnival atmosphere. The city's different districts vie for attention with festive events and special surprise performances on weekends. All around town, shops abroad Christmas cheer with winter sales and special offers on every kind of gift imaginable, while restaurants serve up seasonal delights, delicious food promotions and special deals for visitors.

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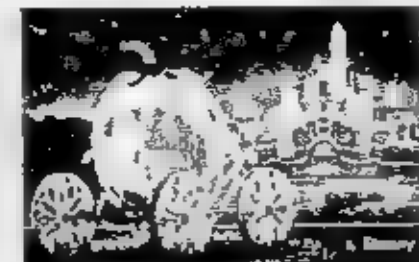
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Counterculture strikes back

THUNDER
ROAD



James Gabrillo

These four little efforts—done in superstyle—make the world a better place

HAVE ALWAYS admired rebellion. Strength, pluck, impetuousness, and uncompromised vision—I look up to those who are capable of putting these words into reality, to those who dare to see past the present.

History tells us that it's hard to be a rebel. To live like one means to reek of failure and self-destruction. When most of our cultural heroes were becoming such, they were muskies who were making people exceedingly nervous.

Yet these days, to be a rebel in a materialistic, amoral world is less about being an outsider, an outcast or a prototypical underdog. It's more about continually challenging the mechanisms that generate art, film, music, and more.

March like you care

It's been said that cinematically, musically, artistically, culturally, our society has sidetracked human beings from knowing what it really means to care. A lot of entries in today's pop culture menu are being labeled as "ground-breaking" for frontally criticizing current conventions. From the no-logo look of our celebrities to the rise of the hipsters, culture today is being equated with stylish revolt. Some of today's sounds, for example, define resistance, spreading a message few political leaders can match. But as much as a revolution isn't always positive, being good is not just about being rebellious.

A hundred push-ups

In these crazy times, we should champion the ability of counterculture to wipe out the pseudo-hip, empty ways of the mainstream. There are other better alternatives out there. We learn how to make good choices by knowing what's out there—by looking closer at the little details of everyday living, by venturing to environments and situations we never thought we'd be a part of, like doing acts of service to a total stranger.

COUNTERCULTURE/D2

Healthy, Hearty Holiday



Indulge in the wholesome freshness of our bountiful harvest. Ripe and juicy, crisp and luscious, plump and tangy... oh so perfect for your daily diet this season.

So have yourself a fresh and fab Holiday only at Rustan's Supermarket!



Where shopping for food is a pleasure

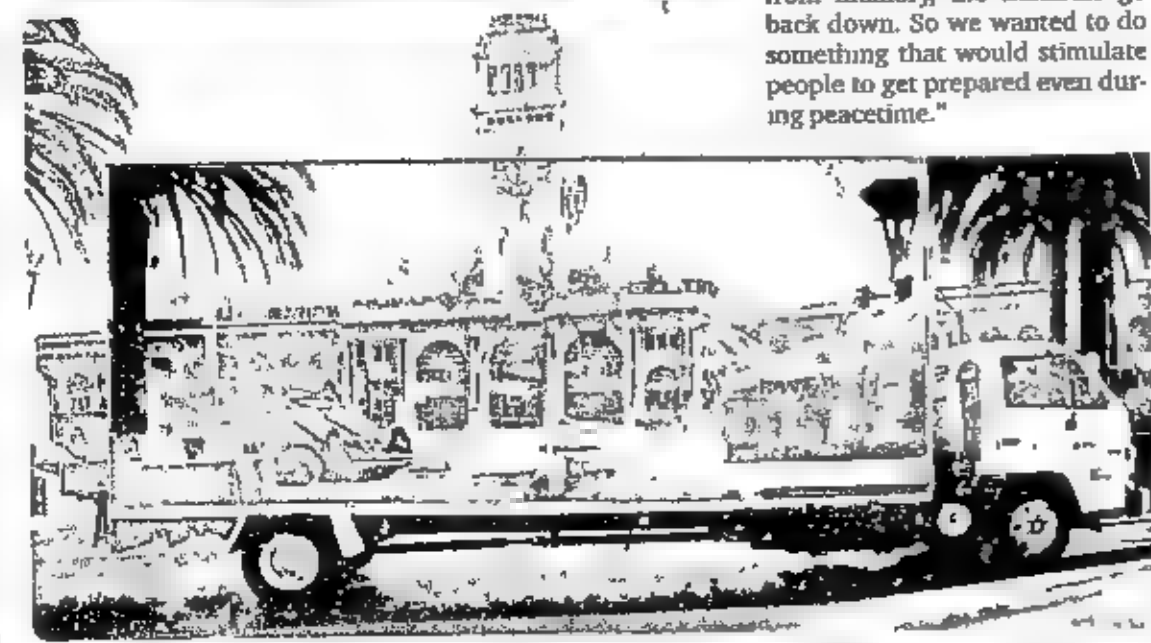
Makati | Shangri-La Plaza | Rockwell | Gateway
San Antonio | Greenbelt | Katipunan | Magallanes
Corinthian Hills | Banawa, Cebu | Ayala Center, Cebu
Alimati | Ayala Alabang | Boni | Edsa Tait | Fairview
Farmer's Plaza | Marikina | Mercedes-Pasig
Sta. Rosa Laguna | Starmall | Zabarte-Caloocan



Creating optical illusions

Currently touring the streets of San Francisco, Red Cross' mobile billboard is hands-down imaginative. Part of the Red Cross' campaign for earthquake readiness (its most aggressive one to date), the provocative mobile billboards were designed to drive people to immediate action using traditional and nontraditional media, including viral and guerrilla marketing tactics. The billboards show what busy areas might look like after a catastrophic earthquake, with downtown high-rises reduced to clouds of ash. Created by Publicis & Hal Runey, the campaign was built around the tagline "What do we have to do to get your attention?" The production on the next phase, which includes television ads, will begin next month.

"The only thing that seems to get people's attention is when a catastrophic event takes place somewhere in the world," says Harold Brooks, chief executive of the Red Cross Bay Area Chapter. "When that happens, we see more people coming in to buy a kit or enrolling to take a course. But when the event starts to fade from memory, the numbers go back down. So we wanted to do something that would stimulate people to get prepared even during peacetime."



Counterculture strikes back

From page D1

For better or for worse, these are times that present new and different ways of challenging people, systems, and notions. For the good of all—this is what rebellion should stand for

It cannot be denied that pop culture, or just plain culture, still serves as a good litmus test of our times. If so, then these five simple, little initiatives are proof that, at the very least, we are beginning to stir up the real revolution that we badly need.

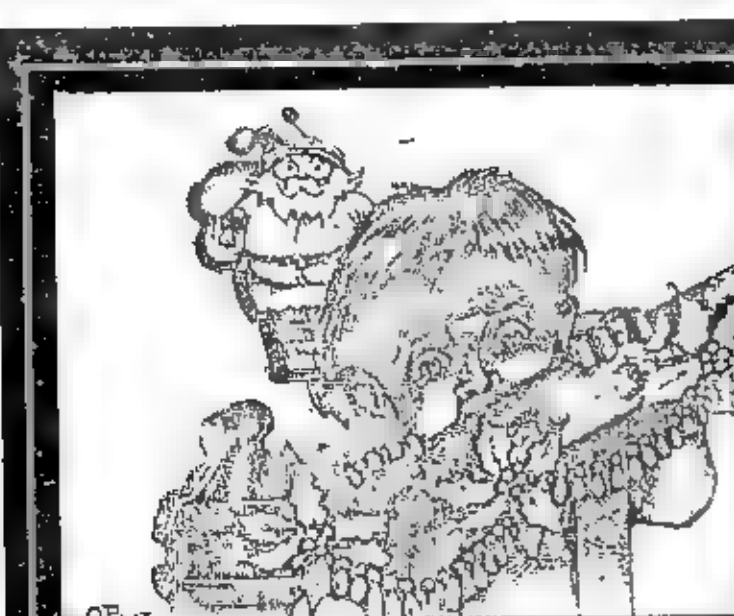
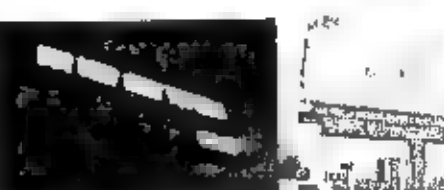
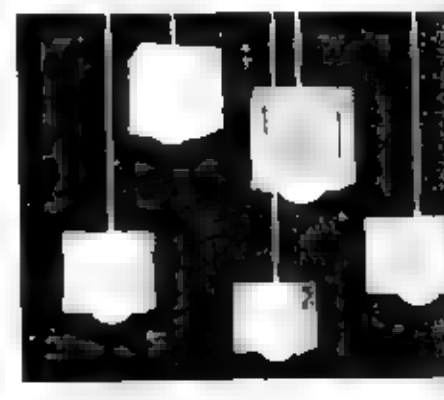


Save the poster, save the world

Nothing says good advertising like a touch of motivation paired with spunk. In an effort to instill awareness on conservation to its customers, Philips recently released its billboards with the image of their globe printed in glow-in-the-dark ink. With the Philips Energy Saving Poster, there's no more need for artificial lighting.

If you wood

Product of the collaborative work, Scrapile developed a unique method wood from New York's woodworkmen mental impact with their work, the twurally, each piece is one of a kind



SAWDADDY KISSING SANTA CLAUS

Remember those old stories about Santa Claus kissing his mother-in-law? Well, now it's a reality. In a new cartoon, Santa Claus is shown kissing a woman.



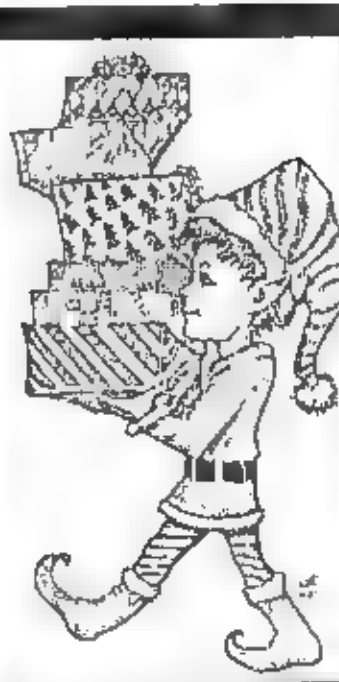
SANTA'S TWIN WONDERS

Interestingly, the Santa myth mutated to include other previously unrelated beings such as elves. Mrs. Claus can be part of it. The kids, I call 'em Kris and Nicole, might look this way. They're both naughty and nice, so it's hard to say who'll take over the family "business" one day.



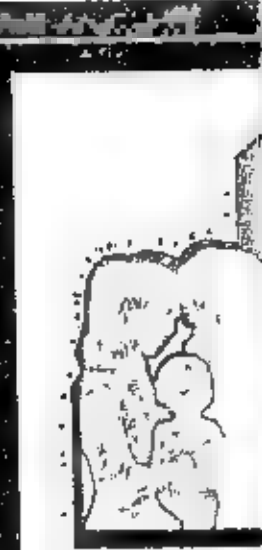
HE GIVES COOL TOYS TOO

Who gives cool toys? Santa Claus, of course. But what if he gives you a cool toy? Well, now you can. In a new cartoon, Santa Claus is shown giving a cool toy to a child.



ELFCHILD LABORER

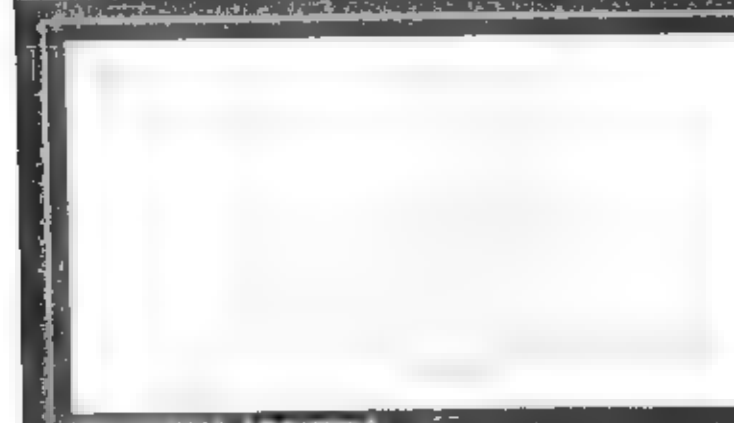
Hmm, it's odd that some of the North Pole workers are sometimes depicted as kids. But since they're mostly elves, they must age differently. Maybe



YULETIDE CAT

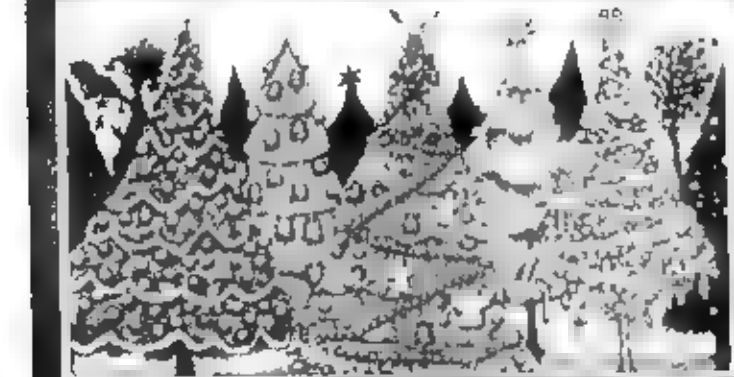
Yuletide Cat is a new cartoon character. He is a cat who lives on the North Pole. He is a very special cat. He is a very special cat.

Swimming against the Yuletide



SAINT NICK AT WORK

Saint Nick probably has an extra-tough tummy to eat and drink everything that people prepare for him. Drinking and flying? Never been a problem.



FESTIVE FOREST

Fake plastic trees are fun to assemble and decorate. Disassembling, removing ornaments and cleaning up usually take forever, though.

Text and Illustrations by Oliver M. Pulumbark

I'M A NON-BELIEVER, YEAH, and I've blogged about it in detail a few times. But I can still appreciate the Christmas season for its emphasis on goodwill and togetherness. As an ex-Catholic, I still have vivid memories of Christmases past. Admittedly, I still find the imagery and revelries related to the holidays appealing, even when I don't believe in a messiah figure anymore. That's just how things are for me.

But you really can't escape the festivities, so while I'm not into "the reason for the season," I'm still appreciating the artistry and celebrations that come with December. I'm also a ninong, so I'm still part of the whole gift-giving scenario.

Just some months back, I planned to draw and post new Halloween drawings to prettify my site. But because of time constraints, I opted to draw a Christmas-themed set instead. I cut up bond-sized vellum paper in half, pulled out gel pens and markers and ended up with the following. Here's my take and thoughts on some holiday concepts.



SINGLE SNOWDAD

The title was the last thing that came to me. Initially, it was just a drawing of a traditional snowman. There was space left for a kid and a pet, so they were included. Seeing them together suddenly inspired the title.



ICONS PARTY HARD

Holiday and feast day symposium. Jack O' Lanterns, St. Nick, Cupid pay their pal Santa.



ALIEN STALIGHT

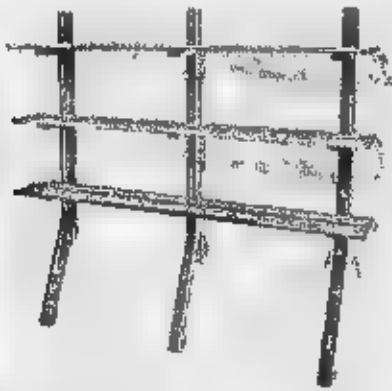
Christmas lanterns with colorful simpler ones still look good. The parcel can come in almost



The medium is the message

In one of its campaigns to help South Africa, Red Cross circulated actual water bottles which were empty. Pasted on the bottles was the note, "Try living on this for three days." Wow.

designers Bart Bertencourt and Carlos Saigado, of collecting and repurposing discarded scraps of industry. Seeking to create a positive environment, they have produced a growing line of furniture. Nat-



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Now, drink this

The guys at Sukle agency released this whole advertising campaign for Denver Water to inform people about the wise usage of water. Clever taglines were matched to a particular medium to produce these ads that made passers-by do a double-take.

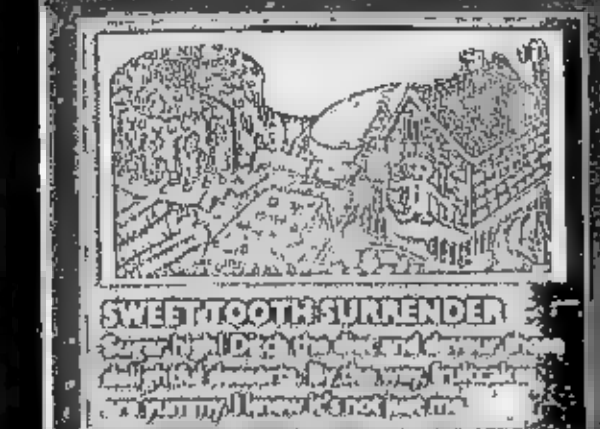


JACK FROST NIPPING

The mythical Jack Frost is a commonly known as snow-bringer. Like snowmen, he doesn't need a scarf, via. his iceworks



help unwind during their annual Christmas Star Blinky, Thanksgiving Turkey and Stoopie



SWEET TOOTH SURRENDER

Over 100 million Americans are addicted to sugar. The only way to break the addiction is to surrender to the sweet tooth.

artful, blinding light up, especially wearing, but not. The design possibilities are high-endless, at any shape, size and material.



In this season of sharing, share what's cool & clean: C2 Green Tea

From the first week of December, our calendar starts to be booked with one Christmas party after the other. And usually this means sharing deliciously rich feasts with friends and family. It's hard to stay healthy when there's just so much fabulous food tempting you. At least make sure you drink something that's good for you!

Make C2 Green Tea your Christmas drink. Delicately brewed from natural green tea leaves and bottled on the same day, C2 has the wonderful flavor of real green tea with all its healthy goodness. Green tea helps reduce the risk of heart problems and lowers high blood pressure. Instead of absorbing the cholesterol, green tea prompts the body to increase the amount of fat it releases. In a way, it helps undo all the effects of that holiday ham and other sinful dishes you're sure to be indulging in!

Be a good host and serve C2 Green Tea to your guests too! C2 has a great variety of flavors that caters to different tastes: green tea plain, lemon, apple, peach, strawberry, forest fruits, kiwi and lychee. You can offer individual servings with the 350 ml. and 500 ml. bottles. For the low-calorie and sugar-free Christmas fix, try the C2 Lite variants of apple, lemon and green tea plain. For the numerous gatherings and parties, C2 Uter is perfect for sharing!

In the true spirit of Christmas, part of every purchase of C2 bought from December 8 to 22 in Robinson's Cebu, Galleria and Ermita, Market! Market!, Tiendesitas, Alabang Town Center, Trinoma and Foodparks (Enterprise, LKG Tower and GT Tower) will be donated to **World Vision**, a humanitarian organization working to make the world a better place for underprivileged children.

Share something really good this season. Share C2 Green Tea.



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FORME

PENSHOPPE



MEMO

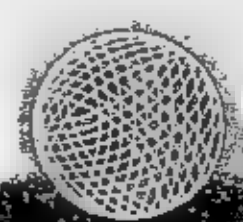
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- MEMO Most Promising Retailer (Fashion Apparel, 2004)
- FORME Most Promising Retailer (Fashion Apparel, 2007)

GOLDEN ABC, INC. is a Filipino fashion retail company that has all of its brands recognized and awarded by the Philippine Retailers Association and the Department of Trade and Industry.



GOLDEN ABC

FISH GO DEEP, TRACY K AND DJ FUDGE HANG OUT IN THE CHILL ZONE

The Manila club scene exploded with the convergence of three international musical acts on one spectacular night: **PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE** featured Fish Go Deep's Shane Johnson, Tracy K, and 'French Touch' veteran DJ Fudge at the latest installment of its uberstylish party series **Chill Zone**. Held at the expansive A. Venue Events Hall, the hip and happening partied down with an all-night open bar in an incredible atmosphere laced with the coolest tunes.



All three artists found their musical careers early: Tracy K, or Tracy Kel-liher says she's been singing "as long as

she can remember" and recalls writing her first song with a friend when she was just five years old. Barcelona-based Parisian DJ Fudge has organized parties in Paris since he was 16, which is how he discovered his love for mixing disco with funk. Shane Johnson, on the other hand, grew up in a house "full of music" as his father was an avid jazz fan.

"I can't think of any other thing I'd rather be doing than this," says Shane. "How I felt about it [growing up] is still how I feel about it now." Evident in his 20 year collaboration with Greg Dowling, Shane's passion for music has resulted in worldwide hits such as "Lil' Hand", "Nights Like These" and UK Chart burner "The Cure and The Cause."



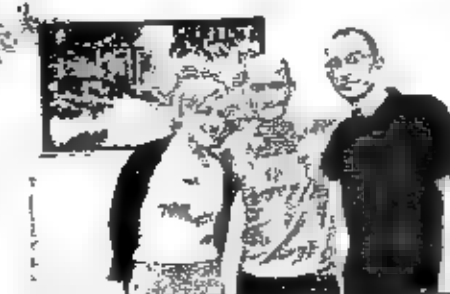
Fish Go Deep's Shane Johnson commanded the turntables in the PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE Chill Zone.



A longtime Fish Go Deep collaborator, Tracy K performs full-tilt onstage but proves she's hardly a diva when it comes to the creative process. "Everything comes from the heart," she says, "I don't write about anything I don't know—

and I think that's what people respond to." A keen writer of poetry and prose, she takes inspiration from her own personal experiences.

Fudge, on the other hand, finds inspiration through his many travels as a sought-after DJ. "Different places, memorable gigs— all of that goes into the music," he says. "I take my inspiration from anything. For example, a gig in Brazil exposed me to the rhythmic percussion style of steel drum bands. I think, maybe I can do something with this, you know?"



PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE 32/1. From left: DJ Fudge, and Fish Go Deep's Shane Johnson in the key with Chill Zone's partygoers in Manila.

Shane maintains the importance of having artistic control of the music. "Producing gives us the opportunity to test our material immediately," says Shane. "We can take them straight from the studio to the club to see what works and what doesn't." DJ Fudge agrees. "It is very important for an artist to be in complete control of what he makes," says Fudge. "Music can never be boring if you continue to improve. I will never stop making music."

And that is exactly what an eager global audience can hope for from these enduring hitmakers. So the next time **PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE** lays the **Chill Zone** scene, expect nothing less than to party with the best in this circle where the vibe is cooler than ever.



Philip Morris Assistant Brand Manager Van Alayaga, PHM Marketing Director Ray Manalo, Low Priced Brands Assistant Brand Manager, only 10th, Philip Morris and Low Priced Brands Assistant Brand Manager Catherine Collopy, Tracy K, Fish Go Deep's Shane Johnson and DJ Fudge

SURFING in Guam
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SURF'S UP! Waiting for the military police to leave so we can surf



COREY and our cameraman Mar on our cliff top entry to the surf break

SLIDE SHOW

Marc Nelson's Photo Coup

By Katrina A. Holigores

CATCHING UP WITH Marc Nelson is no easy feat.

The current star of Sports Unlimited and Amazing Race Asia Season 2 doesn't seem to run out of energy. But even with the busiest of schedules, jetting in and out of Manila, he remains professional and friendly—even sending out a text during the controversial "coup" attempt at the Manila Peninsula, warning people not to pass by traffic-jammed Ayala Avenue.

When asked what other activities he's involved in, he mentions that he supports

The Kythe Foundation for kids with cancer, World Vision and Every Day is your Birthday Foundation.

As for personal goals, he says, "My goal is to get people active and healthy, and make Pinoys realize what a fantastic and beautiful country they live in."

The best way to catch up with Marc Nelson is to give him a camera—to see what he does, and hope that there is enough film in it to keep up.

See Marc Nelson on Sports Unlimited every Saturday night 11:45 p.m. on ABS-CBN and on Amazing Race Asia every Thursday night at 9 p.m. on AXN.



AFTER dinner and dessert in Guam with Dyan, Jacide, Corey and the crew



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Philip Morris King Size

chill zone



Chill Zone Party, Makati



Chill Zone Party Boracay

OWNING THE ZONE: PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE CHILL ZONE PARTY SERIES

Just before the party, the Chill Zone Party Series was kicking off with the series of events. The PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE CHILL ZONE Party elevated the idea of the Chill Zone to a whole new level.

For the first time, the party was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series. The party was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series. The party was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series.

The vibe of the Chill Zone

The Chill Zone Party Series was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series. The party was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series. The party was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series.

In the zone of the Chill Zone

A hard act to follow, but they did it. Holding zone down at Cebu, Formo Bar was transformed into a sick futuristic lounge by Chill Zone. The party was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series. The party was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series.

OWNING THE ZONE: PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE CHILL ZONE PARTY SERIES

Just before the party, the Chill Zone Party Series was kicking off with the series of events. The PHILIP MORRIS MENTHOL KING SIZE CHILL ZONE Party elevated the idea of the Chill Zone to a whole new level.

The shopping and Chill Zone

The Chill Zone Party Series was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series. The party was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series. The party was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series.

DJ Moby was the first to take the stage, followed by DJ Moby. The party was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series. The party was held in a new location, the Chill Zone Party Series.

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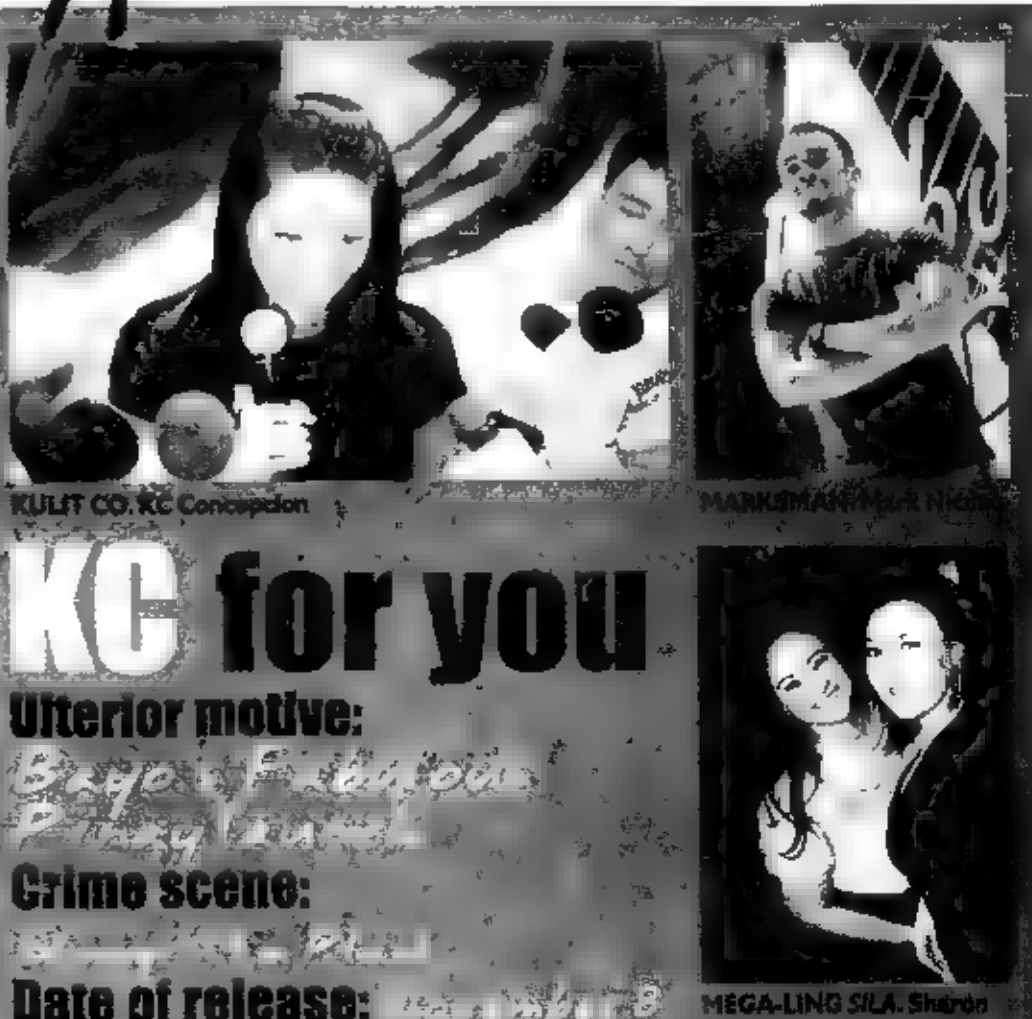


Chill Zone Party Cebu



Chill Zone Party Cagayan De Oro

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Zona sul zone

12 Days of Christmas

For the twelve days of Christmas my true love gave to me:

[illegible]

TALL AND. TAN AND young and—you know the drill Brazil's influence on style and lifestyle has crossed continents and oceans, and into our very shores. So we're clinking our caipirinha glasses to cele-

brate the opening of Zona Sul, a fun and deliciously sexy new boutique that showcases exclusive stylish collections from established and emerging Brazilian brands. Nossa! Here's your first class ticket to the tropical lifestyles of Rio to the urban sensuality of Sao Paulo.

This visually arresting store carries clothes that were handpicked for their distinct designs, originality and character. So don't hit the beach without checking out their colorful printed *vestidos* to cutting edge denim, exquisite lounge wear, and sensual swim wear. The brands offered are as sexy as they sound—Ellus, Cantao, Redley, Totem, Shop 126, Lenny, Agua de Coco and Zoomp. Soon enough, you'll be chillin' like a Brazilian.

Zona Sul is located at the 2/F Power Plant Mall in Rockwell. For inquiries, email info@zonasulboutique.com, or call 729-8847.



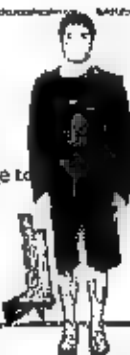
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Rocking Democracy at the NU Rock Awards

Text and photos by Maul V. Reyes

BABES, BOOZE, AND A WHOLE LOT OF ROCK n' roll ... how else will NU celebrate their 20th year in honoring the best musicians in the biz? Now more tame than the past few years' celebrations—more bouncers, less rowdy troublemak-

ers—the night went on smoother than host Asia Agcaoili's flawless legs.

Other than the big wins of the night (record companies were huddled in corners keeping score), the next biggest topic of convo was the Manila Peninsula m.m.-coup that, as we learned, musicians found funny, stupid, and "incredibly hot."

Who said rock n' rollers weren't up to current events?

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From what I saw, she seemed to have done a better job of getting her hair done than I did. I was a bit nervous, but she was so professional and friendly. I was a bit nervous, but she was so professional and friendly. I was a bit nervous, but she was so professional and friendly.



I was a bit nervous, but she was so professional and friendly. I was a bit nervous, but she was so professional and friendly. I was a bit nervous, but she was so professional and friendly.

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ROCKING/FI



The Future is Green at the country's new growth center.

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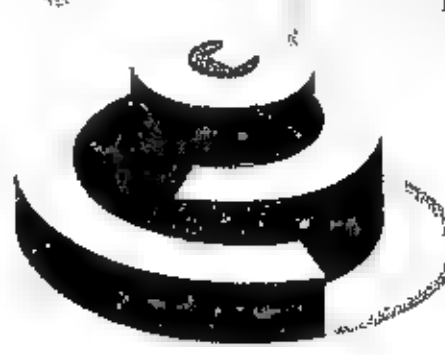
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"I think it's a big
mistake. I'm
going to be a
doctor. I'm
not a doctor."



"I think it's a joke. If you're going to do something like that, you gotta give a bit notice. Don't you think? I mean, it's more than getting 20 guys and walking out of a restaurant. You're going to a hotel. If you're going to camp, you gotta give some advance notice. It was like a joke!" —
—Joe DiMaggio, *Goodnight*



**"We're
always better
about that ... I
was at least
listening to
music the
whole
time."—Jayce
Forrester,
Broomfield**

... You have to let the government grow. Swinging the government's rope off won't let it go beyond its initial stages of growth. Let the system work." —Mansoor Ijaz

They'll never get the support they need. I think they were just checking how much military funds would support them. The war gets TV ratings now, and he could have made a difference in the Super Bowl. Instead he takes it to the streets. A little more patience...he could last three more years." —Dusty Dinkins, Mayor



"I got drunk at home, going to go drinking a noose." —Katie Couric



"Latham, my
partner in crime
throughout life!"
— Joe Bonomo

throat, a little more
narrower. He could
tell three more
years. —Randy in
June, the first

"He's crazy, but for good reason. [The president is] falling sh*t." —*Mary McCormack*

ings up. It was really funny
to hear everything read down
we were just so funny things
rang with the piano." —Dr.

"Happy Birth-
 -day! Happy Birth-
 -day!" -- Happy Birth-
 -day!

Best New Artist: Hilera
Vocalist of The Year: Kat Agarrado of
Sinsikat?
Guitarist of The Year: Ira Cruz of Bamboo
Bassist of The Year: Nathan Azarcon of
Bamboo
Drummer of The Year: Vic Mercado of
Bamboo and Mark Escudeta of Rivermaya
Best Live Act: Bamboo
In The Raw Award: Reklamo
Song of The Year: "Wid You Ever Learn"
by Typecast
Album of The Year: "Moonlane Gardens"
by Urzula Co. & The Room
Artist of The Year: Bamboo
Best Music Video: "Gone With the Wind"
(Directed by Marie Jarama)
Best Album Packaging: Sarah Gaugler
and Clementine for "Moonlane Gardens"
of Orange & Lemons
Producer of The Year: Lourds and Francis
De Veyra for "*****" Mo'Ang
Dam ng Nagugutom Sa Mundo Fashion-
ista Ka Pa Rin" of Radioactive Sago Pro-
ject
Listeners Choice Award: Bamboo
Half of Fame: Mike and Angelo Villegas

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Rocking Democracy



NUI07 ROCKAWARDS 2007 WINNERS LIST

Best New Artist: Hilera
Vocalist of The Year: Kat Agarrado of Sinosikat?
Guitarist of The Year: Ira Cruz of Bamboo
Bassist of The Year: Nathan Azarcon of Bamboo
Drummer of The Year: Vic Mercado of Bamboo and Mark Escueta of Rivermaya
Best Live Act: Bamboo
In The Raw Award: Rakiemo
Song of The Year: "Will You Ever Learn" by Typacast
Album of The Year: "Moonlane Gardens" by Orange & Lemons
Artist of The Year: Bamboo
Best Music Video: "Dvd-x" of Sandwich (Directed by Marie Jamora)
Best Album Packaging: Sarah Gaugler and Clementine for "Moonlane Gardens" of Orange & Lemons
Producer of The Year: Lour and Francis De Veyra for "*****" Mo Ang
Daming Nagugutom Sa Mundo Fashion: Ista Ka Pa Rin" of Radioactive Sago Project
Listeners Choice Award: Bamboo
Hall of Fame: Mike and Angelo Villegas

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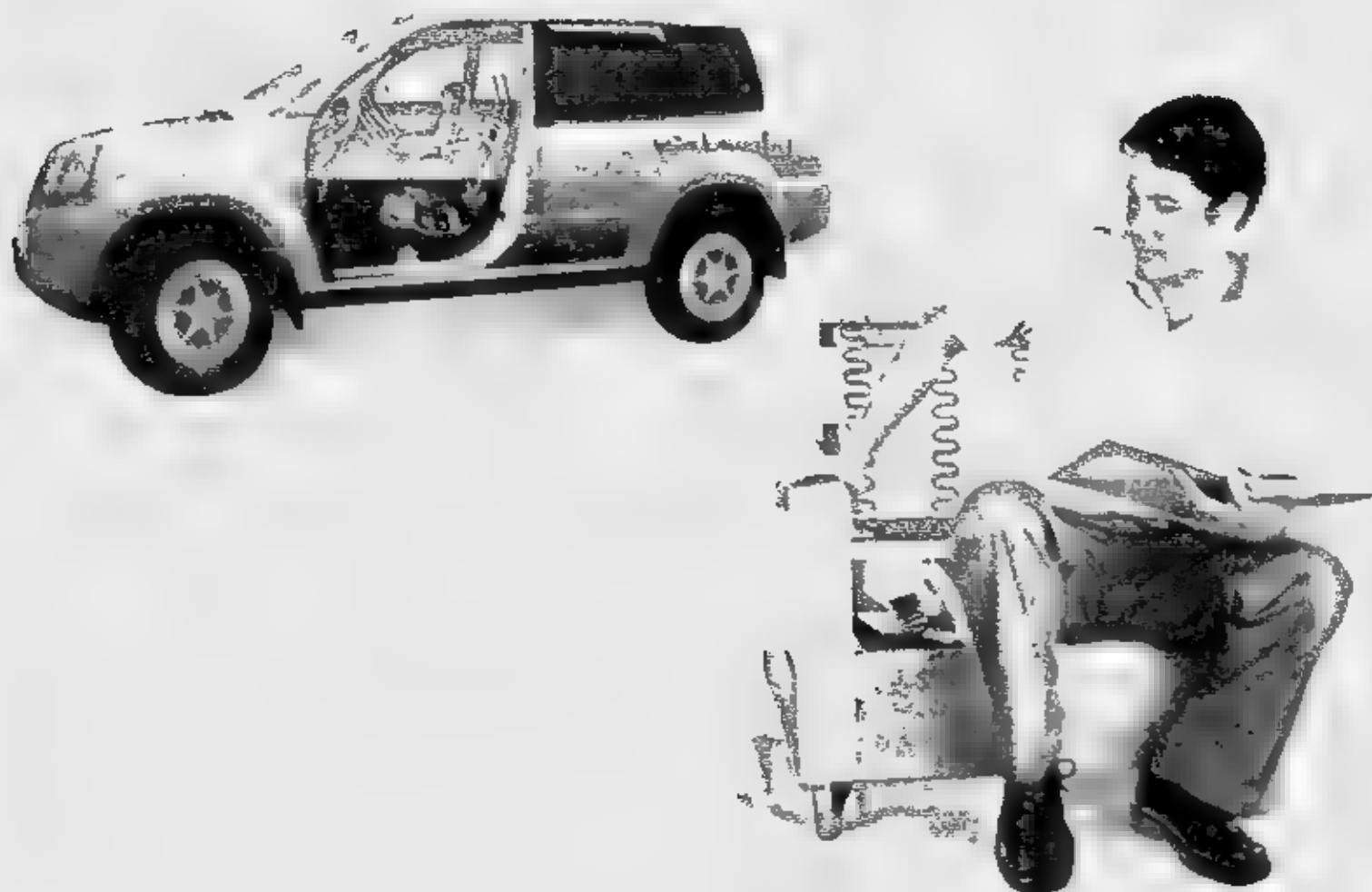
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Mobile revolution

By Niño Mark M. Sablan

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE MOBILE imaging revolution is continuing to move forward. Leading mobile phone brand Nokia has been making sure that it is part of this change.

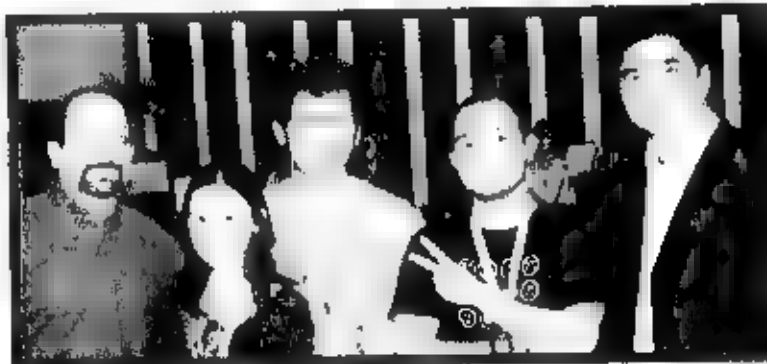
Its latest project, the Nokia Cinemaiks, is a short film-making competition that makes use of the Nokia N series phones. The contest originated from a workshop conducted by Nokia Philippines to give users an opportunity to learn filmmaking using their handsets. Participated in by twelve teams of two from various advertising agencies, the workshop was filled with lectures and an actual filmmaking activity where all participants had to produce a 60-second material using the Nokia N95. The top five teams that scored the highest received a Nokia N95 to be used to compete in Subic for the Cinemaiks 2007 The 1st Philippine Advertising Congress Short Film Festival, part of the activities of the 20th Philippine Advertising Congress.

Last Nov. 21, all five teams went to Subic for the Ad Congress and more importantly, to compete in the Cinemaiks. The teams had only two days to film their entries using the Nokia N95 and with the theme "The Power to Change" in mind. After going around Subic to create their masterpiece, all entries

were submitted last Nov. 23 and then shown to the public and the judges the next day.

The entries are "Imagine" by JP Cuison and Mela Advincula of Leo Burnett, which shows a series of ordinary scenarios but with superimposed drawings that showcase change. "Handa M U" by Katrina Encanto and Nicole Tochimino of Ace Saatchi & Saatchi, which features a guy living his life to the fullest after he receives a text message from God saying time is up. "Naks" by Kara Bautista and Joey Claronino of JWT, which features several masked everyday heroes doing good deeds such as helping the maid car-

SHORT FILM, LONG CHECK. JP Cuison and Mela Advincula of Leo Burnett are awarded their giant check by Sandeep Khanna and Willie Cher for being the grand prize winners of the first-ever Nokia Cinemaiks.



FIFTEEN MILLISECONDS OF FAME. Your Tube winner Kris Camacho (second from left) together with Sandeep Khanna, head of marketing, Nokia Philippines Inc., Homer Medina and Victor Villanueva (actors in the video), and Willie Cher, multimedia business unit head, Nokia Philippines Inc.



ry luggage, "Mongol" by Argem Vinuya and Maki Maquiling of DDB Philippines, which shows the good things a guy would do if he had a magical pencil that can make things come true, and "Touch to Right" by Ana Menguito & Meck Besinga of DDB, which artistically demonstrates how one person can literally touch others and make a change.

Originality and creativity, content and interpretation of the theme, use of technology and overall impact were the criteria for judging. After being viewed by judges Jim Libiran, writer/director of multi-awarded film "Tribu" and ABC5 Head of Public Affairs Production; Fritz Kohle, Singapore-based award-winning producer and former head of post production at Bigfoot Entertainment; and Arlene Cuevas, award-winning producer of independent films, including "Batanes," the winner was determined.

Winning the first-ever Nokia Cinemaiks is the entry entitled "Imagine" by the team from Leo Burnett. According to the judges, the winning short film garnered the highest score because it is "a melancholic depiction of creative power, with images full of foreboding." Team member JP on the other hand thinks that their non-linear story and stop motion animation both helped them emerge victorious.

Apart from the P50,000 cash prize and trophy that were awarded to the pair during the Araw Awards last Nov. 24, JP and Mela also won a trip to the 2008 Hong Kong Independent Short Film and Video Awards.

All entries are also being shown to the public until Dec. 15, after which a people's choice award will be determined. A cash prize of P30,000 awaits the lucky team.

Your tube, your phone

Apart from the Cinemaiks, Nokia also held another contest called Your Tube, which was open to all delegates and guests at the Ad Congress. Over at the Ad Congress convention hall, the vibrant Nokia space had a recording booth where contestants could record their entries. Kris Andrea Camacho, a 2nd year Fine Arts student of the University of San Carlos in Cebu, wowed the judges with her entry entitled "Levitate," a story of two sets of show-off feet. She walked away with a cool Nokia N70 Music Edition and MD-4 speakers.

With the undeniable success of Cinemaiks, Nokia had just proven how significant multimedia experiences can be in life development.

"Our vision for Nokia N series is to enrich people's lives with connected, mobile, multimedia experiences," says Sandeep Khanna, Head of Marketing, Nokia Philippines Inc. "Mobile filmmaking is one of the key pillars for that and we are delighted to see that taken to such outstanding heights in this Ad Congress. We will continue to support this endeavor in the future and more importantly use this to also showcase the incredible creative talent here in Philippines. For us, the camera has just begun to roll!"

24/7 SUPER RADAR

By Jarine Cuenca-Dario and Stef Juan

SMALL first hand the musical genius of Manila. The DJ set they mix house music with live performances with a few of the great vocalists of the local scene at **Bluesman** from **Street Line DJ Lab Experiments**. The vocal talents of Skarlet, Girl Valencia, Jun Lopez and Kevin Roy will come together tonight at the Embassy Super Club. Doors open at 10 p.m. Call 516-4196.

SMALL the sweet scent of the books waiting in the Manila Bay breeze at the **Floating Book Fair** held aboard the world's oldest active ocean-going ship, the MV Doulos, until Dec. 23. From Manila, MV Doulos will sail up to Subic Freeport where she will dock from Dec. 28 to Jan. 14. This floating book fair has been sailing the seven seas since 1914, and is now manned by 350 crew members and volunteer staff hailing from different parts of the world. The stock of about 6,000 book titles covers subjects including science, technology, sports, hobbies, cookery, religions, the arts, and philosophy. So climb aboard and be counted along with the 17 million visitors from 100 countries who have walked on its decks. MV Doulos is docked in Manila at Gate 1, South Harbor, Manila Pier 13 (Near Manila Hotel). For more information, log on to www.mvdoulos.org.



FEEL alive and surround yourself with thousands of music enthusiasts at the SM Mall of Asia open grounds when **MTV Stay-Ing Alive Music Summit** for HIV/AIDS rocks out once again this year. Whether you prefer to just stand, up and sway to the music or go all out slam dancing—Dec. 12 is definitely the night for awesome music from local and international acts, and of course, HIV/AIDS awareness. Gates open at 3 p.m., pre-show starts at 4 p.m., and main show is at 6 p.m. Log on to www.mtvphill.com to see what happened after the puppets.

LISTEN to DJs Migue, Ramirez and Crash play old school R & B classics. Groove to its hypnotic beats as **Whistoni** brings you the W Records weekly Wednesday event at hot night spot **Piedra** [3/F Fort Strip, Taguig, 10 p.m., T 856-0318/19].

Schedules are subject to change without prior notice. For more information on events, log on to www.mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Nocturnal Navigator at your favorite malls, bars, and restaurants. You may also text 24/7 GIGS to 2851 for Globe and Sun and 2951 for Smart. Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mag24-7.com & mag24-7@yahoo.com for inclusion in this column.

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SATURDAY Special

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

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Johnny Depp 'scared to death about singing



DEPP AND BONHAM-CARTER. Test their pipes in Tim Burton's film version of "Sweeney Todd."

LOS ANGELES—"I WAS scared to death, to be honest," Johnny Depp admitted in a recent London interview about taking on the singing role in Tim Burton's film version of Stephen Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street."

In the press con held at the Clandage's Hotel, the star of the blockbuster "Pirates of the Caribbean" series disclosed how he overcame his fear and went on to sing and act so competently. Now, he's one of the Best Actor contenders in the awards season that's kicking into higher gear.

"I believe I said I sounded like a rutting stag, didn't I?" Johnny, breaking into an impish smile, volunteered how he described his crooning talents in our last meeting. In his first singing role, the actor doesn't grate on the ears at all!

On the contrary, his longtime friend and collaborator, Tim Burton's gamble has paid off—Johnny's character-driven singing is one of the many pleasures of "Sweeney Todd," which is one of the best films of 2007.

Johnny's epiphany on how to approach the singing role was the key to the acclaim now being heaped on his performance: "I thought it would be better to find the character through the process of singing the part, as opposed to trying to be a professional singer."

Serial killer

The actor wondered out loud at the risk that Warner Bros. Pictures and DreamWorks Pictures took in making a film about a man bent on revenge and the delicious meat pies that get made as a result. "Isn't it amazing—the idea that these large studios would do a musical about a serial killer that's virtually in black and white? And the studios go, 'We don't know if the guy playing Sweeney Todd can sing. Sure, let's do it (laughter)!' It's amazing!"

The movie is in color, but the only hue that dominates the screen is red—as in blood, lots of it! Tim's wife, Helena Bonham-Carter, Sacha Baron Cohen, Alan Rickman and Timothy Spall, actors also not known for their singing, turn in excellent performances.

Eschewing a zoot suit for a more rugged look, but still with his trademark fedora, the bespectacled actor wore torn jeans with a bandana on the left pocket, a denim jacket that he took off midway through the interview to reveal a printed shirt, leather wristbands, multiple rings on his fingers, and work boots that have definitely seen better days.

Ever the loving family man, Johnny talked fondly about his wife, French singer-actress, Vanessa Paradis, and their children, whom he always calls "kiddies." Excerpts:

This singing role must have been an incredible challenge...

I was so concerned because I didn't want to let Tim down. I was afraid I'd disappoint him. This was a very foreign process to me, because even though my background is in music, I was a guitar player!

The idea of standing in front of a microphone was daunting. But, the only way you

JOHNNY: GZ



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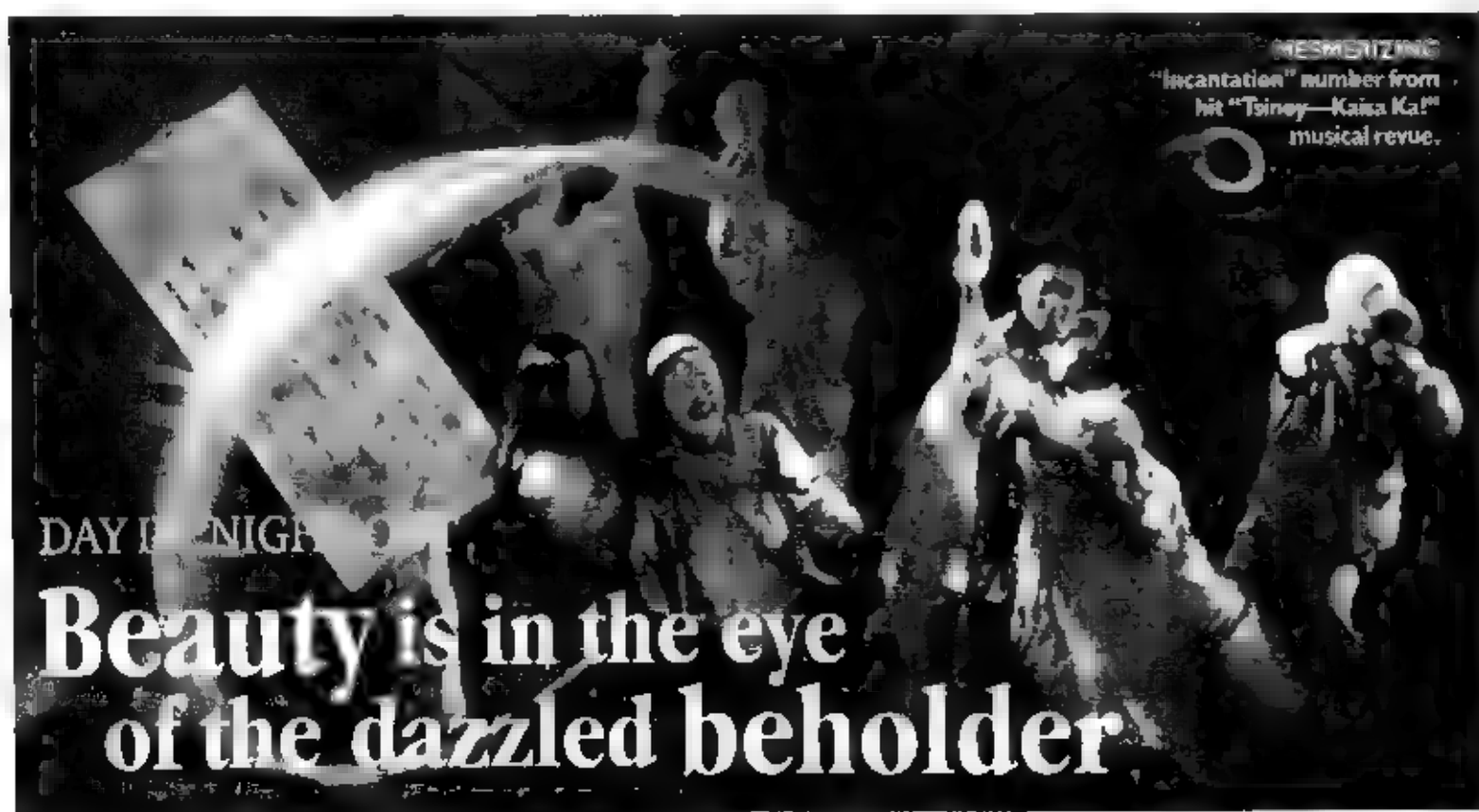


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VISA
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PARTNER



By Nestor U. Torre

THE NEW MISS WORLD, MISS China, was truly beautiful, but quite ironically, she was roundly upstaged in the beauty pageant's telecast last Saturday by the Chinese ballet dancers who stopped the show with their phenomenally brilliant guest performance.

In particular, the prima ballerina and her partner performed amazing feats of "acrobatic dance" that called to mind the

prodigious style of the world-famous Bolshoi Ballet.

More phenomenal

Truth to tell, however, the Chinese ballet dancers' *pas de deux* was even more phenomenal than the Bolshoi's best efforts. What they did was to combine their prodigious ballet ability with China's even more prodigious acrobatics tradition.

The result was an amazing series of seemingly impossible moves and poses

that left us breathless and incredulous: The prima ballerina dancing on point on her partner's shoulders—then on the top of his head; the ballerina held aloft in a radically "cantilevered" position that threatened to come undone, but didn't; the ballerina being "thrown" around like a weightless doll, but with absolute control and focus—etc.

Even more impressively, these "impossible" feats were executed so beautifully that they didn't look like circus acts. It was still ballet, while being stunning acrobatics at the same time.

For the benefit of people who failed to watch the "Miss World" telecast, we wish that the pageant can be shown anew, especially for its "impossible" ballet number, thanks to the new Chinese superstars of dance. China's new Miss World is great,

but its stunning ballet dancers come off best of all!

PRIME movers

Pete Roa may no longer be with us, but his initiatives and principles are being kept alive by his loving wife, children and friends, who have put up PRIME, the Pete Roa Integrated Media Endeavors Foundation.

At its recent press launch, the foundation introduced its PRIME movers: Headed by Boots Anson-Roa, PRIME's board of directors includes Marichu Maceda, Bibsy Carballo, Dr. Abdias Aquino, Raffy Evangelista, Jose Mari Chan, Ed Roa, Fred de la Rosa and this writer.

For its first project, PRIME is producing a play on the inspiring life of St. Padre Pio. Why this particular initial production? Boots revealed that Pete was a



MISS China was roundly upstaged by phenomenal ballet dancers in the Miss World pageant.



DAVAO, Cast as Padre Pio in Prime Foundation's stage play.

devotee of Padre Pio, especially when his illness had taken a turn for the worse, and that he had derived great consolation from his devotion.

Padre Pio will be played by the acclaimed stage, TV and film actor, Rucky Davao, who is already deep into rehearsals with the rest of the production's talented cast—Boots herself, Andy Bas, Shiela Asuncion, Nelson Caruncho, Mica Torre, Jan Alexander, and other stage stalwarts.

The play starts its run at Nendesitas in the Ortigas commercial complex on Jan. 13, 2008, Pete's birth anniversary, and runs for an initial two weekends, after which, it will be taken on tour. If you want the play on Padre Pio to be performed in your parish, school, community or office, call Andy at 780-9210 or 0919 206-5424.

Through the glass, brightly

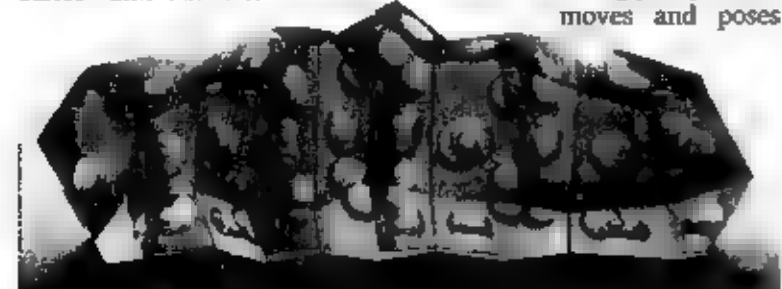
2007 has been a busy and productive year for glass sculptor Ramon Orlina, and his year-end schedule has been particularly hectic. In the span of only one month, he has participated in three exhibitions: His solo ex-

hibit at Serendra's Art Verite gallery, a group show mounted by top Filipino artists in Indonesia, and another solo exhibition, "Abstract Emeralds," at Galerie Joaquin Main. Even more impressively, his exhibits have been sell-out events, making him one of the most appreciated artists in town.

Aside from his art, Ramon is also excited about his musical production, "Birhen ng Caysasay," some of the stars of which will be featured in a tertulia tonight in Taal, Batangas. Even better, the acclaimed religious musical will have more repeat performances early next year.

'Tsinoy-Kaisa Ka!'

Another well-received musical, the Kaisa Para sa Kaunlaran Foundation's "Tsinoy-Kaisa Ka!" revue, will have a repeat performance at 3 p.m. on Dec. 16, at Kaisa's own theater in Intramuros, sponsored by the Alumni Association of Uno High School. For tickets, call 252-1920 or 527-6086. More performances early next year are also in the works. One repeat performance deserves another!



"EMERALD CITY" wins pride of place in Orlina's latest exhibit.

Unique Yuletide bazaar

PET ME HOME IS A COINED "word" that means "take me home" for a pet that hopes you'd like it so much you'd buy it and take it home. You'll find the specialty corner at "Yule Go Wild! A Village Christmas Bazaar" at the Avenue Hall (Antel), Makati ave. cor. Gen. Luna st., Makati City from Dec. 14 to 16.

At Pet Me Home, you'll see 4-year-old Tyler petting baby sheep at Zoobic Safari or Kert and his mom playing with a Bengal tiger. Zoobic Foundation and the Yupangco Exhibits are promoters of this unique Christmas bazaar with an Animal Park.

The village bazaar also fea-

tures an amazing animal show, in which viewers will see poodles dancing the waltz and the tinkling. A chimpanzee will at-

so be shown shooting balls through a miniature basketball ring.

The animals are under the care of very good animal trainers. The shows are similar to those seen at Universal Studios in the US.

Aside from the Animal Park, the bazaar also boasts of 200 concessionaires offering unique items ideal for Christmas gift-giving.

Food extravaganza

There's a food extravaganza, Fashion Boulevard, Motor Kingdom, YL Finance, Aqua Primera and Yamaha. In the evening, there will also be magic demonstrations, fireworks display, and live entertainment. Call Yupangco Exhibits and Shows at 899-9824 or 898-3695

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STREET SMART



Mandy Navasero



TRAINER Lito gives his dancing poodles a hug.

New watering hole for artists emerges

By Behn Cervantes

IN THE LATE '60S AND EARLY '70S, Manila artists were easy to find—because during that raucous period of the First Quarter Storm, there existed When It's a Grey November in Your Soul coffee shop, owned by Ishmael Bernal. The popular filmmaker gave the place his personal touch: It was unpredictable, exciting, literate—and welcoming to artists and kindred souls alike!

Berne could turn a weak business night into an eventful happening. At 9:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, he would stage productions toppled by Manila's theater elite. So, on a given Wednesday night, you might see a performance from the Barangay Theater Guild, starring Daisy Avellana, under Bert Avellana's direction.

Husband-mentor

Or, you could catch Ella Luansing being directed by Rolando Tinio, her husband-mentor. Or, you could watch an outstanding performance by Tita Muñoz in "Sorry, Wrong Number."

After Bernal left for a film scholarship in India, Grey November closed down. Such was Bernie's personal impact on the café and its nightly patrons! So, its loyal patrons moved over to Indios Bravos, owned by Betsy Romualdez, where you would find Virgie Moreno,



MONTANO, Owner of Bellissimo.

Nick Joaquin or Federico Alcuaz occupying the center table nightly.

Regularly, when the spirit so moved its habitués, they would request waiters to turn up the music of Jim Morrison and the Doors. Eventually, Indios would become the best disco in Manila, where the mood was extemporaneous and "happenings" were regularly mounted.

Free-wheeling atmosphere

Tourists walking along Mabini street would gather outside the disco's glass windows to find out what was going on inside. High society's Chona Kasten and Elvira Manahan would occasionally drop by to ex-

perience Indios' free-wheeling atmosphere.

Alas, soon after martial law was declared, the place was closed down! Other establishments have since attempted to recreate the ambience of Grey or Indios. In fact, just three years before he passed away, Bernie opened another such watering hole in Quezon City. Unfortunately, it didn't work out.

So, when Cesar Montano invited me to La Dolce Vita, a group exhibit by artists who include the actor and Arnel Ignacio, I accepted. It was to be held in his Italian restaurant, Bellissimo. On the second floor of the establishment hung the works of Jes Evangelista, Grandier Bella, Raul Roco Jr., Florence Cinco and Norito Meimban.

Styles

Their styles were distinctly different. Cinco focused on metal and the effects of light on scratched areas, while Evangelista experimented with shapes. Roco, on the other hand, produced altered shape and colors.

I convinced Cesar to turn his place into a watering hole for today's artists, where they can discuss artistic issues or stage poetry readings. With a number of educational institutions located in the area of Morato avenue, Bellissimo could well become today's Indios and Grey!

Johnny Depp 'scared to death' about singing

can find out if you can do it by doing it! So, I closed my eyes and dove in. I made a couple of demos and sent them to Tim and then, I got positive response from him. I hope it's all right—it's hard for me to tell.

How was that experience—going into a recording studio and making demos for the first time?

I did them with Bruce Witkin, who was in a band called The Kids with me. We grew up together. He's a bass player. I asked him, "Can I go into your studio and sing (laughing)?"

His first reaction was, he laughed a little bit, as he should have. Then, I went to the studio. It was very comforting that it was just the two of us. I've known the guy for 30 years—I trust him implicitly! I was able to take that leap with him!

Did you go to a vocal coach?

Initially, I was thinking very responsibly and decided, "I'm going to get a vocal coach, take singing lessons and do the whole thing!" But, before I was actually

able to do that, I went into the recording studio with a friend of mine. It was a tiny garage. I started to record pieces of music just to see if I could sing.

At a certain point, the idea of going to a vocal coach, standing in front of a piano and doing scales seemed counterproductive. I thought it would be better to find the character through the process of singing the part, as opposed to trying to sound professional.

What was the hardest song to sing?

In a weird way, you'd think the most difficult song was "Epiphany," because this is the song where the character goes nuts while he's running around. On one level, it's the hardest song because it requires hitting certain notes and sustaining them.

But, ultimately, "Joanna" was probably the most difficult, because it's so soft, and it's such a heartfelt piece! There are notes that you have to sustain, and you have to remain somewhat pleasant (laughing)

Did you watch DVDs of "Sweeney Todd's" stage productions or listen to cast recordings?

The first thing that Tim gave me years ago was the Angela Lansbury-Len Canou recording—I listened to that a lot! I saw the Patti LaPore-Michael Cerveris version onstage in New York. But, the most important thing I was able to do, aside from familiarizing myself with the material, happened a year ago while I was shooting "Pirates" in Palmdale, California.

I spent two hours every day from Los Angeles to Palmdale, then another two hours every night to go home. I put the "Sweeney Todd" CDs in the car stereo and listened. I had another version that was just the music, with melody lines played on piano to give me my notes. I would listen and sing embarrassingly!

After that, I was able to hit the notes, and I felt like I was in the arena where I'd be okay. So, I called Tim and said, "I think we're going to be all right." That was

when I went into the studio with my friend—and the first time ever in my life that I belted a song from start to finish! The song was "My Friends." I just sang as best as I could and I got great coaching from my friend, Bruce, who would say, "Maybe you want to hold this note a little longer?"

Since Vanessa is a singer, did she give you tips on singing?

Vanessa was very helpful, because she was the initial victim. Before I sent my first recordings to Tim, I brought them home to her and said, "If I'm going to be fully embarrassed, I may as well play it for you!"

So, I played it to her to see if I was doing the wrong thing. She was very supportive about it. She's a very talented singer. She offered me all kinds of advice in terms of holding a note. More than anything, she gave me confidence. Oddly, she liked my voice. That was a miracle to me!

There's a lot of blood in this movie.

The funny thing is that my relationship with blood changes only



DIRECTOR BURTON (left), with Depp.

when I do a movie with Tim (laughing). He always ends up being the person off camera, squinting blood on my face. It was absolutely true on "Sleepy Hollow" and on this one.

You've worked with Tim many times before, but how was it this time with Helena also in the film?

It definitely took a few minutes to get used to, because Helena and Tim obviously know each other on a very different level (laughing). They both handled the situation very well.

You're very good at giving

compliments.

During a day, if you don't make someone smile or feel good about himself, you're not a man! I don't think you're fulfilling your part of the bargain as a human being. I don't blow smoke just to make someone feel good.

Sweeney Todd is a driven man. What drives you?

I've never been particularly ambitious. I'm driven by the moment.

Sweeney was driven by revenge. What's your own attitude toward retribution?

JOHNNY/G3

The coconut tree...

From page G4

It was only when the sharp, hard object whacked into its bark again that it realized that something was terribly wrong—and it was so surprised that all its coco fruits came tumbling down to the ground!

Children

It was then that the children came running out of the house, out the gate and around the wall—until they rested against the oddly bent trunk of the coconut tree.

And this was when the coconut tree saw another extraordinary thing—for they were crying and sobbing as though their very hearts would break, and their tears were falling for it. It! An ordinary coconut tree that wasn't covered all over with twinkling lights and that didn't have a golden star on its head.

"But children," said the bewildered man who had been hacking at the trunk of the coconut tree, "your parents told me to cut it down because it ruins the view." But, the children wouldn't budge. They clambered up the coconut tree and stayed there until night fell and the stars came out—and their parents finally gave in.

So, the coconut tree wasn't cut down. And in the days to come, it would feel something else in its heart that wouldn't have anything to do with its old yearning to be a Christmas tree and to wear pretty lights and a shiny star on its head.

After Christmas, the coconut tree watched as the star was taken down, the gleaming balls were unhooked and the lights turned off and put away. Then, the Christmas tree was dragged out into the open and the coconut saw it clearly for the very first time. Why, it doesn't even have any fruits, it thought—what good is that?

Taken apart

Then, the tree was taken apart and washed with soap and water and the coconut realized that it wasn't even a real tree at all, only something made to look like one!

It sighed and shook its head, dropping a still-green coconut to the ground. Soon, the coconut tree would forget that it had ever wanted to be anything else than what it already was—but anyone who would get the chance to taste the buko juice from the tree's coconuts would always say that it reminded them, inexplicably, of Christmas!

New albums give music fans reason to dance and celebrate the holidays



SPEARS.
Her groove-driven sound masks her sleek-but-frivolous persona.

By Rito P. Asilo

TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE having fun, so they say. But, fun, which best defines Britney Spears' ever-evolving musical taste, is hardly a word the troubled singer can use to describe her ascent to pop music heaven—and her consequent fall into tabloid hell.

In her surprisingly buzz-worthy album, "Blackout," the 26-year-old pop phenomenon acknowledges how much of a nasty-talk magnet she's been since she took the music world by storm via 1999's "...Baby One More Time."

In the second track, "Piece of Me," for instance, she complains about how she's been "Miss American Dream since I was 17/ Doesn't matter if I step on the scene or sneak away to the Philippines/ They still got pictures of my derrière in the magazine/ You want a piece of me."

Sentiments

For people who have seen how she's been making a spectacle of herself since 2003's "In the Zone" (and her breakup with Justin Timberlake), it's hard to argue with her sentiments. As brickbats for her booze-driven

antics and cheap stunts continue to pile up, Britney has managed to keep herself "in the zone"—with good reason!

Spears' 12-track fifth album is a dance-heavy collection that boasts of tunes that will make people forget their woes—and their drunken, giddy indiscretions. Sounds familiar?

Britney should thank her lucky stars for a first-rate team, composed of some of today's best producers like Nate "Danja" Hills ("Gimme More") and Bloodshy & Avant ("Radar"), who successfully incorporate Spears' present state of mind into an infectious groove-driven sound that conveniently masks the singer's sleek-but-frivolous persona. The album likewise wins points for its coherent, sexy vibe.

Provocative

In provocative numbers like "Gimme More," "Get Naked," "Ooh Ooh Baby" and "Freakshow," the raunchy sex-tinted teasing and defiant tone doesn't titillate anymore.

But, at least, "Blackout's" state-of-the-art polish, innovative dance beats and high energy will make you groove till you, well, blackout.

Spears, now the eighth best-selling female artist in American music history, may not live a charmed life, but, on the Billboard charts, her music does!

If you prefer a warmer, more Christmasy sound, turn to Jim Brickman's "Homecoming" or Erik Santos' "All I Want This Christmas," instead. Brickman's holiday album is the perfect companion, as you bask in the hazy glow of December's cold mornings.



BRICKMAN. Memorable collaboration with Gerald Levert.

Instrumentals

The 46-year-old new-age music proponent continues to win over pop jazz lovers with his richly melodic, piano-driven instrumentals and earnest collaborations with guest vocalists and musicians.

"Homecoming," like 1997's "The Gift" and 2003's "Peace," is no exception: Guest performances come from Lonestar's Richie McDonald (in the soon-to-be-classic, "Coming Home for Christmas"), David Klinkenberg ("Joy"), Tracy Silverman, Peter White, frequent collaborator, Anne Cochran ("I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"), and the late R&B artist, Gerald Levert.

Levert recorded the poignant lullaby, "My Angel (Christmas)," for Brickman's "Escape" album last year. The latter wanted to re-

work the song with Christmas lyrics for "Homecoming," but the R&B luminary—who was Brickman's classmate in high school—passed away before that could happen. Indeed, a beautifully fitting swan song!



SANTOS. Much-improved musical aesthetic.

Seasonal favorites

On the local front, Erik Santos lends his much-improved musical aesthetic to Christmas carols in the Yuletide collection, "All I Want This Christmas."

His "Silent Night/Oh Holy Night" medley is a polished, beautifully rendered R&B reworking of those seasonal favorites.

Happily, he's also learned that less is more—there's hardly any trace of the "shouting" bravado that got Santos the "Star in A Million" title years ago.

In the winsome "Christmas Is" and "I Dream of Christmas," Erik embraces the holiday spirit with subtle confidence and exudes heartfelt warmth in each song—most notably in his cover of "The First Noel." He likewise gives Martin Nievera's "All I Want This Christmas" a more intimate interpretation.

But, the album's best songs are its Filipino tracks, "Ngayong Pasko" and the sweetly somber "Tag-ulan sa Pasko," which deftly demonstrate how the balladeer has evolved as a recording artist through the years!

Johnny Depp ...

From page G2

In a perfect world, it's a fairy tale-like, beautiful notion to forgive and forget. I don't know if anyone is really capable of it. I have to say that I'm not (laughter). If someone has done me wrong, I will go out of my way to make sure that he understands that I'm onto him—maybe in a subtle way. It could also be karmic. I'm a firm believer in retribution!



BONHAM-CARTER. Has the most challenging singing role in "Sweeney Todd."

E-mail: rmepales5585@yahoo.com, and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/nepalesreport.

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YULETIDE STORY FOR YOUNG READERS

The coconut tree that dreamed of Christmas

By Noelani Torre

NEAR THE EDGE OF A WARM, CLOUDY SEA grew a young coconut tree that was thinking thoughts and dreaming dreams that you can be sure no other coconut tree has ever thought or dreamed before.

The tree didn't look any different from the rest of the palms in the grove, though chance had it growing farther away from its siblings and nearer a wall that wrapped around a big house glittering with windows.

Very odd

Perhaps it was where it was sown that made it different inside, or perhaps it had already been that way even before it had taken root—however it may have come about, one thing is certain and that is that it was a very odd coconut tree, indeed.

While the other trees around it drowsed under the hot sun or exchanged insults with the unruly *habagat*, the young coconut would be dreaming about the extraordinary thing it would see inside the big house every year when the cold season would set in.

It all began when the coconut tree had grown tall enough to look over the wall and through the fancy glass windows of the big house. The first thing it had seen was a strange-looking tree with even stranger-looking leaves all over its body.

Then, people had come and hung shimmering balls on its branches, draped it with little twinkling lights in all the colors of the rainbow, and crowned it with a bright golden star that seemed to wink at the coconut tree, promising the coming of even greater things.

"What is that?" it had asked the *amihan*, the *habagat*'s cooler, kinder sister.

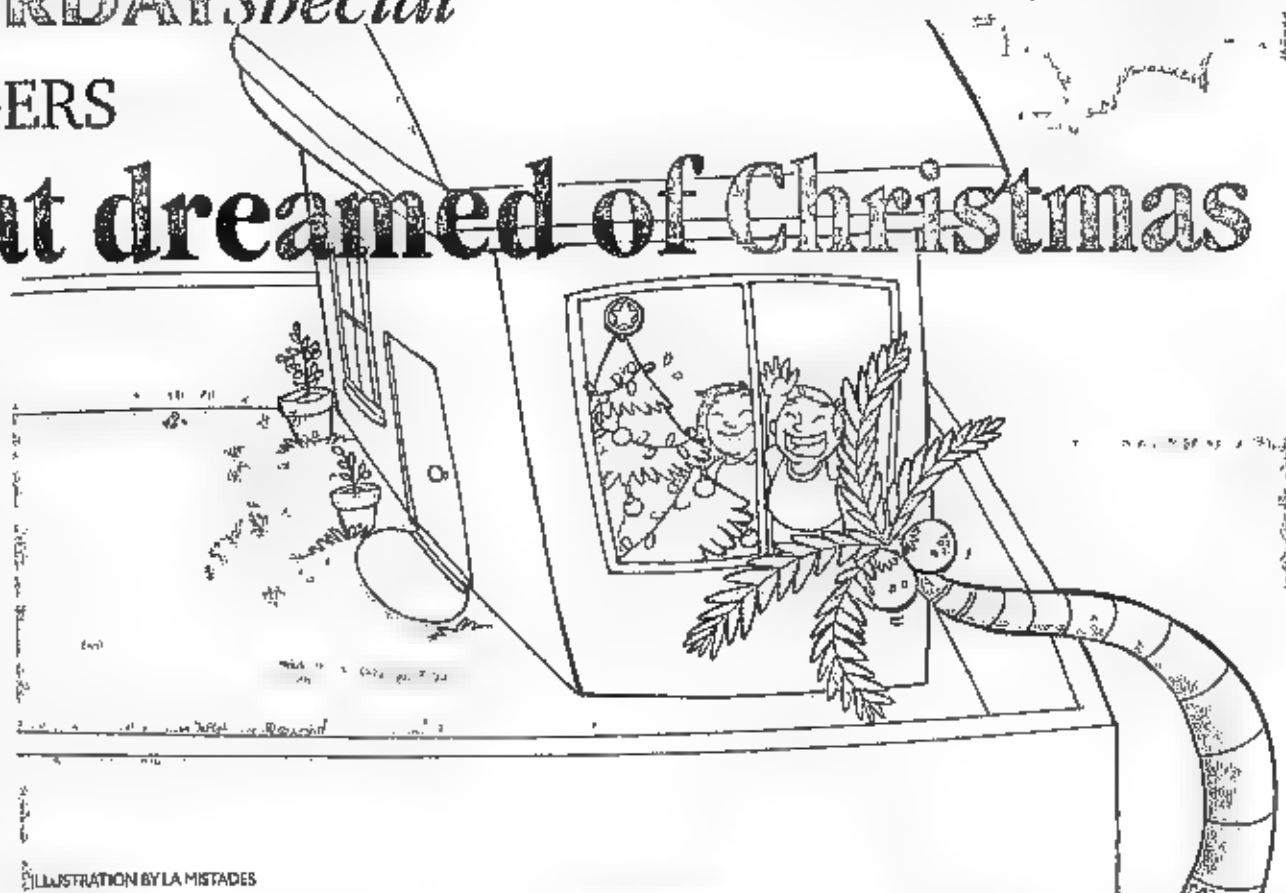


ILLUSTRATION BY LA MISTADES

SIMULA NA NG SUKATAN NG KAKAYAHAN

Pagkatapos ng mga... pagkatapos ng mga... pagkatapos ng mga...

Pagkatapos ng mga... pagkatapos ng mga... pagkatapos ng mga...

Pagkatapos ng mga... pagkatapos ng mga... pagkatapos ng mga...



CHRIS TIU

MANNY PACQUIAO

PAGKATAPOS NG WISH KO LANG

MAMA NA!

Pagkatapos ng Wish Ko Lang

SABADO STAR POWER sa Gabi sa

GMA

"That," she said as she rustled through the young coconut's leaves, "is a Christmas tree." And then she told the curious coconut about ribboned boxes called presents, tables groaning under the weight of food, children flushed with excitement and fat from too many sweets, and the many other things that people do during the season called Christmastime.

As it listened to all these wondrous things and watched the Christmas tree's lights twinkling through the grey of dusk, a wish sparked and caught fire in the young coconut's heart. To be a Christmas tree, it thought wistfully, was probably the very best thing that a tree could ever be, and it sighed a great big sigh and dropped one of its coco fruits even though it was still green.

Little beetles

From that time on, the young coconut slowly ceased to care about the sun, the sand, the rain, or even the pesky little beetles that would sometimes crawl up its trunk and nibble on its leaves.

Even after Christmas was over and the strange tree had been taken down and put away, the young coconut still thought and dreamed about it. This went on for days, weeks and months until the *habagat* left in a flurry of storms and the *amihan* made her cool, crisp way across the sea and it was Christmastime once again.

Another Christmas came and went and still the coconut tree kept dreaming and wishing and sighing. Its yearning was so great that it weighed it down and instead of growing upward, it grew sideways and over the wall—and its coco fruit would drop periodically even though they were still green!

One day, in the heat of summer, two children came running and laughing out of the big house and stopped to stare agog at the sight of the coconut tree that was now not quite so young and had grown very oddly indeed, with its palmy head hanging over the wall and the ground beneath it littered with coco fruit.

Strange

"That's strange," said the girl to her brother. "I never noticed that before. Why, that tree is all crooked and there are coconuts all over the ground!" "So what, it's a coconut tree," said her brother who was younger and didn't know as much.

"Silly," she said, poking him in the stomach, "the coconuts should fall when they're brown already, not when they're still green like that. But, I bet the water in them will still be sweet." And they proceeded to gather all the nuts they could, with one eye on the tree just in case more would come falling down.

By this time, the coconut tree had gotten roiled from its usual daydream of twinkling lights and golden stars. It watched the children scamper back into the house with two coconuts each and come slowly back out sometime later, sipping coconut water from straws stuck into the fruit.

"This is good *buko* juice," they said. "Really good!" And it was, for the fruit was heavy with the dreams and yearning of the coconut tree and had a distinctive flavor that inexplicably reminded the children of Christmas.

They considered the coconut tree once more and walked out the gate, around the wall and right up to its oddly bent trunk for a closer inspection. The coconut tree held itself very still as small hands and feet clambered up its back and the still summer air was suddenly alive with the chatter of young voices.

Fruit

"This is a weird tree," said the boy when he sat down. "But, it sure is easy to climb," said his sister, whose legs were dangling in the air. They played a lot on and around the tree that summer and the coconut tree soon got used to being sat on and dangled from and the still green fruit that would fall would always get picked up.

Then, the rains came and the children stopped coming. Before long it was Christmastime again and the coconut tree dreamed once more about wearing a golden star on its head, though this time it would also dream about high, happy children's voices.

One brisk afternoon in December, the coconut tree was too preoccupied with waiting for the lights of the Christmas tree to come on, and at the same time watching the door of the house for the children who might come bursting through, that it didn't even notice the first cut that was made on its trunk.

Mary J. Blige feels 'Growing Pains'



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Big-screen adaptation of fantasy novel falls short of expectations

By Noelani Torre

THOSE WHO HAVE READ AND liked the books of Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials" trilogy, among them critics and award-giving bodies, more or less agree that his novels have the makings of classics.

Like all the best fantasy fiction, Pullman's trilogy—consisting of "The Golden Compass," "The Subtle Knife" and "The Amber Spyglass"—succeeds in creating a world of its own that a reader can get completely immersed in. A film version of any of these books, then, needs to achieve the same results. If it does not, it would be nothing less than a failed adaptation.

Unfortunately, this is what New Line Cinema's take on the first book ends up "achieving." Joining the ranks of films that have been unsuccessful in translating book magic to movie magic, the novel's film version, "The Golden Compass," (the novel's original title is "Northern Lights") has an able cast and seamless special effects, but it could leave you cold.

Alternate world

The story takes place in an alternate world, where people's souls are called daemons and can be found not inside them, but outside. They take the form of animal shapes that em-

body their personalities. In this world, an authoritarian group, the Magisterium, seeks to impose its control on everything and everyone, committing terrible acts on children in the process.

The heroine of the tale is Lyra (Dakota Blue Richards), a plucky 12-year-old orphan being raised by scholars in the fictional Jordan College at Oxford. Her only family, it seems, is an explorer/scientist uncle, Lord Asriel (Daniel Craig), whose visit one day is the precursor to the arrival of the icy beautiful Mrs. Coulter (Nicole Kidman) and Lyra's subsequent journey to the North in search of lost children and the truth about a mysterious substance called Dust.

Fascinating

Now, this is a fascinating world—one that Pullman brings to vivid life in the book, but in the film, it is curiously flat and, despite the CGI-enhanced details, two-dimensional. Sadly, the movie is an anemic version that has been stripped of complexities. It has been reduced to a series of scenes that move the story forward, but don't take your heart along with it.

Directed by Chris Weitz from his own script, the film is a triumph of visual-effects technology, but not even the most impressive visuals can make



RICHARDS. Plays the movie's plucky, 12-year-old protagonist.

up for the slackness of the narrative and the half-baked realization of a reality that demands intricacy and elaboration. The visuals—as well as the cast—do make the movie more enjoyable to watch, however.

The fresh-faced Richards is charming and spunky, while Kidman is perfect as the icy and slinky Mrs. Coulter. Craig only appears for a few minutes (his role is merely used as an introduction to his future appearances in the sequels) and is overshadowed by a CGI polar bear with armor and the baritone voice of Ian McKellen.

To be fair, "The Golden Compass" is enjoyable enough, but it should have been nothing less than brilliant. Perhaps they'll get it right the second time around, but do yourself a favor—read the books!

Mary J. Blige feels...

From page H1

but with songs that matched up to where I'm going and where I'm at in my life. He's such a sweet man—a gentleman who respects women. When I got a chance to sit down with him and talk, he totally understood! You know, men don't usually relate to or understand women on that level.

You're seen on TV with a car commercial, and you've been acting occasionally in the past. Now that you've conquered the music world, is acting the next frontier?

It's my goal to do more acting if it works for me. I'm not trying to get into the film business just because I'm Mary J. Blige. I don't want to make a fool of myself with everybody laughing and talking about me like a dog. I want to get it right (laughs). Scripts have come my way—it's just a matter of choosing the right one.

I went to read for a film role, and I could have gotten the part. It was for a director who, being new himself, didn't want to take a chance on a new person. So, he wanted to go with a seasoned actress. But, the feedback I got behind the scenes was that my reading was great. So, the word is out that I can do this.

Was it a dramatic role?

Yes. I would have played the part of a woman, Linda, whose husband was a crooked cop who got killed. In the role, I was mourning for my husband. So, I had to go to dark places in my own life to do that. I remembered mourning over my cousin when he got killed, and I remembered an abusive relationship. I had to rewind my life.

Events

The songs that made me go there were Roy Ayers' "Everybody Loves the Sunshine" and "Searching"—songs I was playing heavily when those events were happening in my life. I didn't like going there, but I had to for that reading. I kept crying even when I was in the car afterward.

Getting back to music, who's at the top of your wish list to work with?

When and if I do a jazz album, I'd want to work with Anita Baker. I love her! I'm a huge fan. There's also the possibility to do a gospel album. Everyone always asks that question, and I believe I would.

Growing up, were gospel and jazz major musical influences?

Not really. It was more whatever was playing in my house. When I was a little girl when I was about 4 years old, I remember hearing "Everybody Loves the Sunshine." That's the reason why I know who Roy Ayers is. My father was a musician—a bass player—and he had a band.

From his end, it was about everything from Parliament to the Grateful Dead. My mother was the soul chick. She listened to everything. Candi Staton, Gladys Knight, Dorothy Moore, Sam Cooke, Bobby Womack and Otis Redding. She'd be around the house singing their songs.

Evolution

If you could use only one phrase or one word to describe the evolution of Mary J. Blige, the artist, what would that be?

Then: Starting to wake up. Now: Aware! (laughs)

Now that you're aware, what would you do differently if you were just starting out?

I would probably behave. (laughs) I can't change what I was because I didn't know any better. But if I'd have known then what I do now, I wouldn't have done any of that stupid stuff.

Wouldn't that have affected your music, given that it's derived from your experiences?

That's true. But, you know, showing up 10 hours late for an interview or not showing up at all doesn't have anything to do with anything. That's just stupidity! I wish I'd done that differently instead of (in a mimicking voice), "I'm not going. I'm hung over. I'm staying home!" (laughs)

Meanwhile, you've got interviewers and

MARY J./H3

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SATURDAYSpecial

123

'Oprah Effect' makes itself felt in US politics

By Nestor U. Torre

FOR MANY YEARS NOW, OPRAH Winfrey has been setting the standard for stars' involvement in boosting laudable initiatives and inspiring the populace. In fact, her efforts and their results have even been given a name—"The Oprah Effect."

That effect has been considerable in various spheres. In literature, her Book Club on TV has encouraged readers to buy the novels it features monthly—in the millions of copies.

In education and the empowerment of young women, she has spent \$40 million of her own money to put up a pioneering school for leadership in South Africa. And Oprah's Angel Net work has spent even more millions to help many more causes, organizations and individuals all over the world.

Most influential

As a result, Winfrey has been cited as the most influential woman in the US, among many other distinctions. In fact, some political king- and queen-makers have opined that, if she ran for president of the United States, she would stand a good chance of winning.

But Oprah has decided that running for political office isn't for her—to the great relief of more am-



WINFREY. Has been setting the standard for stars' involvement in boosting laudable initiatives.

bitious male and female politicians!

Instead, she has decided to use her considerable persuasive clout with the public to support the presidential candidate of her choice—Sen. Barack Obama. She is speaking up for him in the Iowa primary, and political analysts are excitedly waiting to see how the so-called Oprah Effect will play out for the first time in the field of politics.

Early indications suggest that the effect could be considerable. This early, Obama has, for the first time, surged ahead of heretofore Democratic presidential frontrunner Sen. Hillary Clinton, 28 percent to her 25 percent. In addition, Obama has been rating higher with women voters than Clinton—a development that has surprised observers, who presumed that the gender factor

would favor the female candidate.

What's going on? Political observers now believe that, in voters' eyes, Obama represents change, while Clinton is associated with traditional politics—and Obama is scoring higher in surveys because many American voters want change.

If the situation favors Obama at this early age, it's likely that Winfrey's active endorsement in the next few days could add to his advantage.

Presidential nomination

Some observers rue Winfrey's preference for Obama, because it could help prevent Clinton from clinching the Democratic presidential nomination—and possibly becoming the first woman to become president of the United States of America. Since Oprah is herself female, it is deemed ironic that she would have a hand in this happening.

For Winfrey, however, the racial factor could have greater potential and actual value, as far as historical significance is concerned. Or, she may simply feel that, regardless of this of that factor, Obama would make the best president of the US at this point in time.

Whichever motivation actually holds sway, the power of The Oprah Effect in this latest and most significant instance cannot be gainsaid!

Mary J.

From page H2

people at photo shoots waiting for you who don't care about any of those excuses. They're there to do their jobs, and you don't show up! And now you're difficult!

Early on, you were tagged "the Queen of Hip-Hop Soul." Do you ever tire of that moniker?

There's nothing I can do about it, because it's something I've earned. I would never disrespect it. Hip-hop is not something that you ultimately hear. It's a culture we grew up in, and it became us. This is the way we think, walk and talk. There's intelligence in hip-hop.

Extension

A person doesn't have to slump all over, curse or act stupid to do hip-hop. Look at Erykah Badu, D'Angelo or Jill Scott. They live in that culture, and you can hear it in their music. It's what others labeled neo-soul, which is just an extension of hip-hop/soul. Jill Scott carries herself pretty well. A Tribe Called Quest gave us jazz influences. I also loved the Jungle Brothers. If you knew who they are, then you're really a hip-hopper. They made you feel good about our culture.

What are your thoughts on the ongoing controversy about rap lyrics?

Honestly, it's not just a song's fault or a lyric's fault. Parental guidance is key. You can have your child listen to all that, but it's up to you to say, "Look, that's what they do, but this is what you're going to do! You can't judge them for what they do. But, as your parent, this is what I would like you to do, and it's the right thing!" It's society as a whole that's the problem. It's not about a song doing the killing or making women promiscuous.

Will you still be singing at age 50 or 60?

That's up to the people. If they request it, I'll be there. But, I'm not going to force myself into people's lives! *Reuters*

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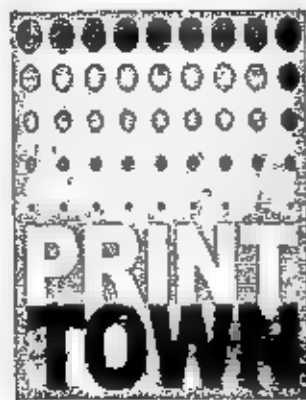


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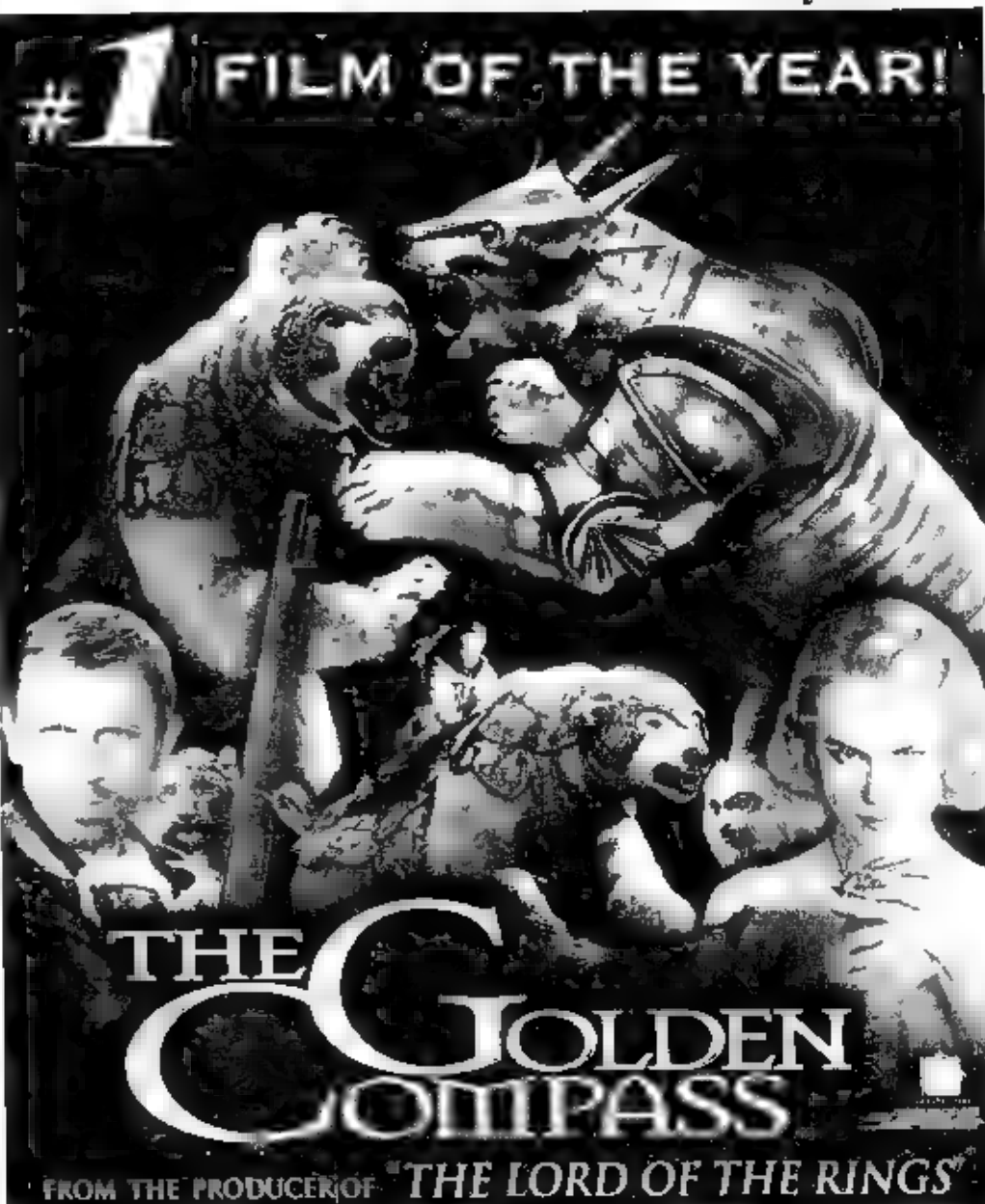


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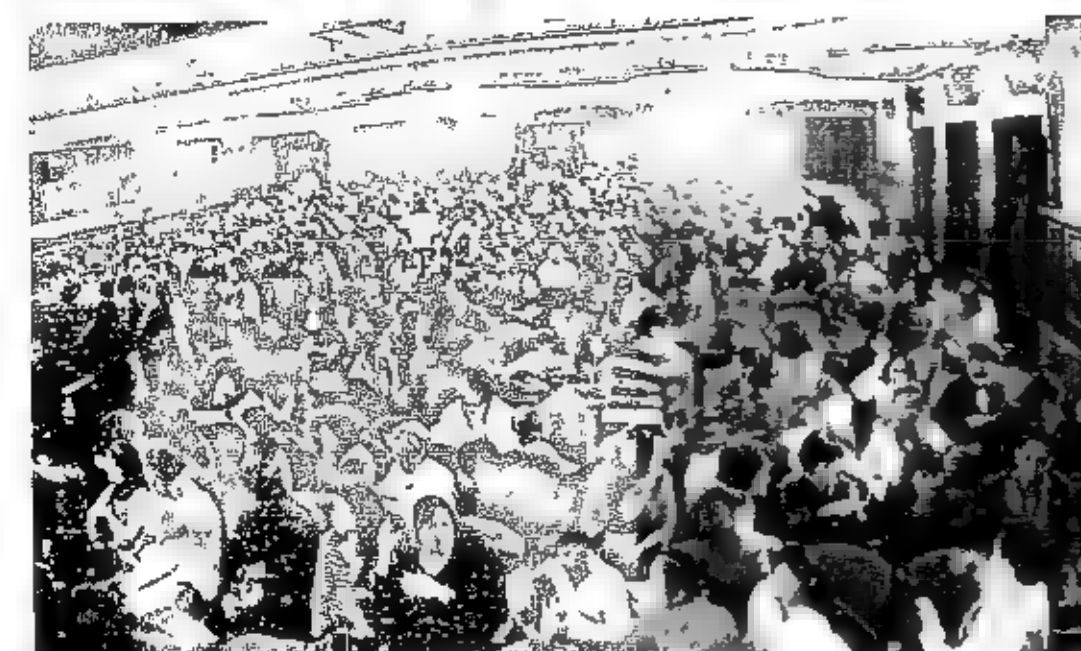
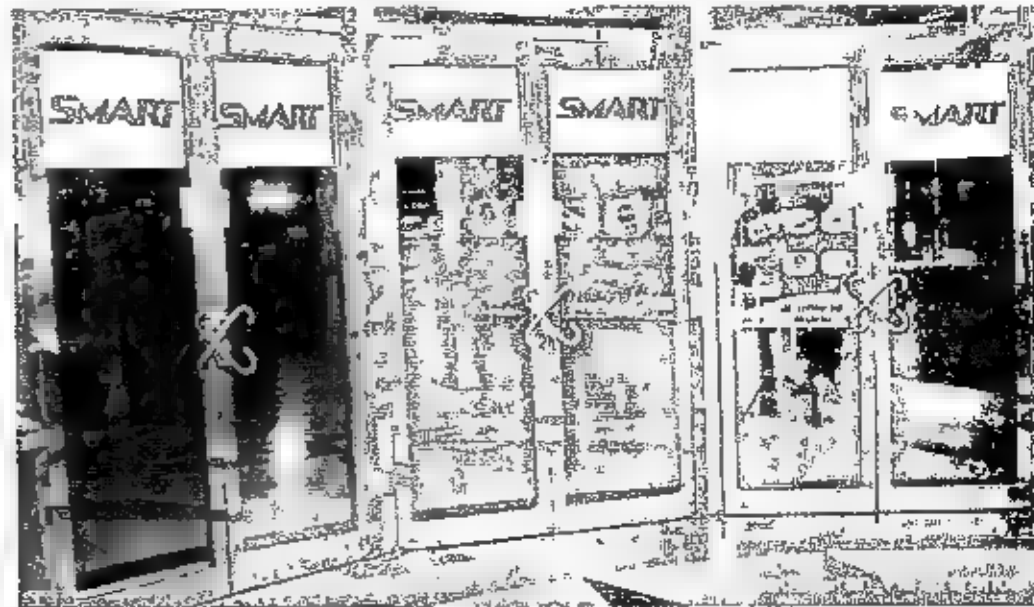
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EUROPE, NOW WITHIN REACH

SMART launches OFW SIM in Spain, Madrid

November 10 was a special occasion to thousands of Overseas Filipino Workers making a living in Europe. SMART, once more, broke communication barriers as the telco giant unveiled the OFW SIM.

Raffles and contests were held during the event where exciting gifts and prizes were given away. The highlight of the night was when Martin Nievera and Rachel Alejandro put on an amazing show much to the delight of our beloved OFWs. Another part of the program that raised their spirits was the launch of the actual SIM, which allows them to stay connected to their loved ones back here in the Philippines. "Ok itong OFW SIM a! Bihan ko na mga officemates ko..." said a very grateful attendee. The event was truly a memorable one for OFWs in Europe, which was a product of SMART's ingenuity and sincere objective to serve Filipinos here and abroad.



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Black, married and aged.

IN THIS ISSUE

■ 'Oprah Effect' makes itself felt in US politics /H3

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BPI EXPRESS CREDIT

Zac Efron reprises role in 'High School Musical 3'

LOS ANGELES—As after-school jobs go, Zac Efron's is shaping up to be more lucrative than most. After months of playing coy and holding out for approval of a final script, the Disney star has at long last signed on to reprise his tween heartthrob role in "High School Musical 3" for a \$3 million payday, announces Entertainment Weekly.

The 20-year-old actor's allowance for the kid-friendly trilogy is more substantial than his fellow East Highers, and his signing completes the alignment of "HSM's" stars. Neither Efron nor Disney has commented on the seven-figure salary.

For weeks, it's been reported that Efron, along with girlfriend Vanessa Hudgens and Ashley Tisdale, were all seeking pay hikes for "HSM3," which, unlike its TV-movie predecessors, is targeting a theatrical release. All three stars have publicly maintained that they would be back for the latest installment, which director Kenny Ortega has said will focus on the gang's senior year and include the requisite prom scenes.

Negotiations

Efron was one of the last Wildcat holdouts to complete negotiations, apparently waiting for the right amount and the perfect screenplay. "If we agree on a final script, nothing will hold us back from doing it," he stated.

Earlier, both Hudgens and Tisdale confirmed they had signed on for another round of song-and-dance shenanigans, though they declined to confirm reports of a hefty payday of their own. But, then again, they didn't deny them, either.

"We don't talk about our income, but Disney's great!" Tisdale told reporters at the American Music Awards. Cameras will roll on "HSM3" in March, with Corbin Bleu, Monique Coleman and Lucas Grabeel also due back.

Remake

News of Efron's big payday comes after he proved his big-screen mettle in this year's "Hairspray," and was attached to channel Kevin Bacon in a remake of "Footloose." He's also got a brand new gig to work on before he resumes his "HSM" duties.

According to the Hollywood Reporter, Matthew Perry has signed on to join Efron in the "Big" like comedy, "Seventeen." The film centers on an average father (Perry) who wakes up to find he's once again a teenager (Efron). In an effort to befriend his own children, he enrolls in an elite high school—and passes himself off as a new student!

Reuters

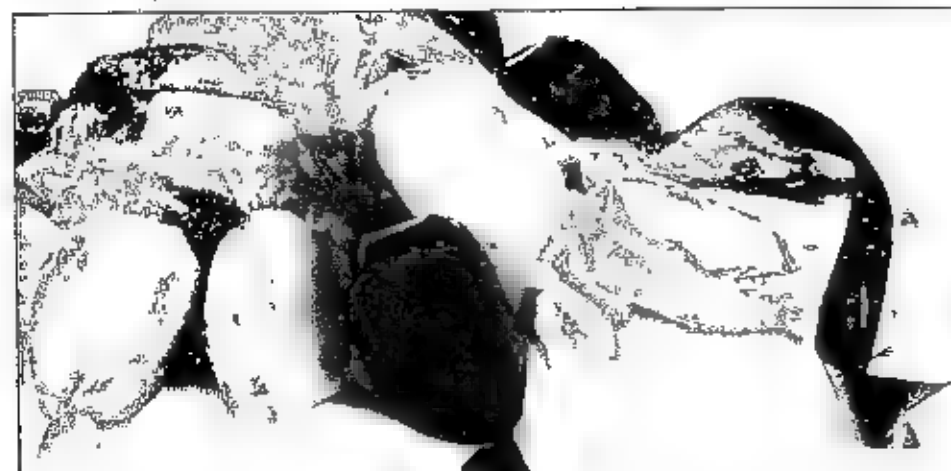
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Alix wins some, loses some in back-to-back dramatic features

By Rito P. Asilo

ADOLF ALIX JR., THE soft-spoken director of acclaimed Cinemalaya features, "Donsol" and "Kadin," is arguably the local movie industry's most prolific director these days. Impressively, just one week after his cautionary drama, "Tampolista," was shown at the Cinema One film festival, two of Adolf's latest projects, "Batanes" (which he codirects with Ignite's Dave Hukom) and "Nars," are being shown in theaters this week—with varying degrees of success.

"Batanes" is an interracial love story that uses the hills and seas of the picturesque northern Philippine town as a fitting backdrop for Alix and Hukom's cinematic paean to romance:

City girl

After independent-minded city girl, Pam (played by Iza Calzado), meets small-town boy, Rico (the promising Joem Bascon), she thought she had found her fairy tale-like happy ending.

She then leaves her urban surroundings behind and relocates with Rico in Batanes—where her hubby drowns in the sea after an epileptic attack!

One year after the tragedy, however, the grieving Pam finally finds a reason to move on when she runs into the body of Kao (P4's Ken Chu), a Taiwanese fisherman, on a beach in Batanes after a storm.

Despite the language barrier, Pam and Kao become fast friends, and they soon find solace and comfort in each other's loneliness and grief. Then, despite strong objections from Rico's family, the star-crossed pair discovers love again.

The film takes full advantage of Batanes' sprawling landscape. For this alone, the movie shouldn't be missed. The charismatic Calzado (who's good even in bad indie, like the recent "Mona") carries the



CALZADO AND CHU. Topbill interracial love story in "Batanes."

movie on her able shoulders, with strong support from the film's great-looking cast. Even when scenes teeter in implausible dramatic mush, she consistently vivifies Pam's journey.

Bascon is a major acting find with a striking screen presence—although he tends to smile his way through his scenes too much.

Chu, however, isn't so successful. The handsome international star—who sports a spiffy haircut and hip earrings—has obviously gained some unwanted pounds since appearing in 2001's "Meteor Garden" and 2003's "Sky of Love." The charisma is there, but the acting chops, unfortunately, aren't.

Our minor quibble about the film involves how Kao is treated by the locals, who are surprisingly unwelcoming after he ends up wounded and discombobulated in the shores of Batanes—which we found inconsistent, malicious and unfriendly (he was threatened with arrest and deportation) Where has the vaunted Filipino hospitality gone?

In "Nars," Alix follows a group of nursing students on their last two terms in school—a feisty bunch played by Jennylyn Mercado, Jodi Sta. Maria, "Pinoy Big Brother's"

Jon Avila, Coco Martin and Agot Isidro, who's refreshingly sympathetic as a doctor who ends up taking a nursing course to fast-track her dream of leaving the country.

The well-intentioned film attempts to tackle a lot of relevant issues, but it is mired by the confounding narrative clutter. And it doesn't help that Mercado resorts to the kooky schtick that has made her a box-office darling in her movies with Mark Herras. The endearing energy is there, but without an internal life, that kind of energy doesn't really amount to much.

Improbable

A possible but improbable narrative sidebar features the doctor-turned-nursing student failing the nursing board exam—which is a curious choice in moving the exposition.

In one scene, for instance, when an innocent bystander is hit by a stray bullet, the nursing students around tried to revive the patient—by merely checking the patient's pulse rate! Hasn't anybody heard of CPR? No wonder Isidro's character failed the board exams.

Obviously, touchy issues such as these require greater care, research—and sensitivity.



MERCADO. Plays a student in "Nars."



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Fatty Acids (EFA), precursors of DHA and AA, which are important nutrients for your baby's brain development.



Getting ready for breastfeeding

By Dr. Ma. Carmen Hernandez-Quevedo, FPOGS
FEU-NRMF Medical Center

A pregnant or breastfeeding mother has to maintain a healthy diet to be able to provide enough nutrition to her baby and to herself. This will help her produce quality breast milk that will nourish her child.

Breastfeeding is a once in a lifetime experience a mother can share with her child. And although most mothers are aware of its benefits, the attention rate among breastfeeding mothers remains high.

This is usually due to lack of commitment on the part of the mother.

Breastfeeding poses several challenges, and if the mother is not aware of these, her resolve to provide her baby with the best source of nourishment may weaken. A breastfeeding mom should be physically and emotionally ready for the experience. This is especially true for first-time mothers.

Physical preparation should start with proper nutrition. A pregnant or breastfeeding woman is not advised to go on a slimming diet. She has to maintain a healthy diet to be able to give enough nutrition for her baby as well as for her own reserves. This will help her produce quality breast milk that will nourish her child. There is no need to worry about not losing extra weight because breastfeeding makes losing weight easier and faster.

To make sure mothers get the right nutrient concentration and quality, a maternal milk supplement especially formulated for breastfeeding women is highly recommended. This is to ensure that they get all the essential nutrients they need to produce enough, high quality breast milk.

Emotional preparation is also important among breastfeeding mothers. At this stage, she needs the support of her family, especially her husband's. One of the reasons why women sometimes give up breastfeeding is their spouse's indifference to it or lack of support. At the early stages of breastfeeding, husbands should be supportive and helpful. Other family members can help by taking care of other household responsibilities.

Mothers who have decided to breastfeed should do so as soon as the baby is born. This is the key to ensure the success of breastfeeding. Latching the baby as soon as possible after the delivery helps the mother produce and express milk, because breastfeeding essentially

follows the law of supply and demand.

Finally, getting enough information is the best way for would-be mothers to ready themselves for breastfeeding. They should read reference books, surf the Net or get tips from fellow

mothers who have successfully breastfed. This would guide them on the proper ways of breastfeeding and enlighten them on old myths about the practice.

Usually, women who say they can't breastfeed because they don't have enough breast milk, or because they have inverted nipples just weren't prepared for it or didn't have enough information about breastfeeding. They just need proper instruction on how to breastfeed properly.

To sum it up, a new mom can prepare for successful lactation by maintaining a healthy diet, keeping herself informed on the subject and making sure she is surrounded by supportive family and friends. All these will undoubtedly help strengthen her commitment and ensure a successful breastfeeding experience for her and her baby.

Finding protection

LAST WEEK, WE WERE JOLTED BY an earthquake that seemed to last longer than it actually did. People ran out of buildings, children cried for their mothers, and some classes were called off.

As it became apparent that the earthquake was only going to be mild, I reflected on how precarious our situation is in this world. An initially perfect day could end in disaster—that could change our lives forever! It's difficult to feel completely secure.

Survival skills

Disaster-preparedness is crucial and practical in a country prone to disaster. It doesn't hurt to learn sur-

LOTUS POND



R. Valencia
and S. Bismark

vival skills and techniques like First Aid, search and rescue operations, rappelling, and other emergency procedures.

However, there are other "disasters" we can't prepare for: Business ventures can fail, friends can turn their backs on us, and a beloved spouse can

be unfaithful. How do we find security in an easily changing world? What do we do when we come face to face with our biggest fears?

Just remember God's promise of protection. Whatever it is, it can't be bigger than God! His jurisdiction is all-encompassing—and nothing or no one is more powerful than He, because God is the Supreme Controller! His love will protect us in our time of need.

So don't worry. There's no need to be scared of the present or the future. We don't need to fear death or rebirth. Whatever the situation, remember that true protection comes from our Lord—He won't put us in harm's way!

Fusion of rock concert . . . From page 14

'Fuentes. "Hotbabe Gone Wild" is available on DVD and VCD.

'Alien vs. Predator 2'

Colin and Greg Strause's "Alien vs. Predator 2" starts when the Predator scout ship crash-lands, the Alien on board escape, and they infect a town. The town's inhabitants are caught in the middle of the ultimate face-off between the two monster forces, even as the government bombs the town to prevent the deadly infection from spreading.

Hit compilations reunite rock groups

Rob Thomas and the guys of Matchbox Twenty reunite in the hits collection, "Exile on Mainstream," the arena-rock group's first album since Thomas went solo in 2005. Featuring a bolder and more confident sound, the boys' hefty, 17-track album includes hits like "How Far We've Come," "3 AM," "Unwell" and "Real World."

Also on the comeback trail are adult-alternative rockers, The Goo Goo Dolls, with the release of "Greatest Hits, Volume One: The Singles," featuring a 14-song lineup that includes "Iris," "Let Love In," "Slide," a remix of "Feel the Silence," and a new version of "Name."

'Big Love'

A new episode of "Big Love" will premiere on HBO every Monday at



"BIG LOVE." Offbeat contemporary drama is telecast every Monday on HBO.

Bruce Dern and Bill Paxton.

Ilya Rashkovskiy

Tonight at the Philamlife Theater, Russian pianist Ilya Rashkovskiy will perform Chopin's Seven Waltzes, Scriabin's Valse, Op. 38 B major, Ravel's La Valse and Valses Nobles Sentimentales, Liszt's Soirees de Vienne: Valse-Caprice No. 6 and Mephisto Waltz. Call (02) 400-7023

'Pasko ng Komiks'

At 9 a.m. on Dec. 11, the "Pasko ng Komiks" symposium at UP Diliman's Pulungang Claro M. Recto discusses the relevance of komiks in contemporary Filipino life. There will also be a komiks exhibit at Galleries 1 and 2 of Bulwagang Rizal.



GOO GOO DOLLS. Release greatest-hits album.

11 p.m. The offbeat contemporary drama topbills Chloe Sevigny

Fusion of rock concert and tattoo competition



NOKIA



Poster

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Pop Fernandez
Duplicities

With Special Guests:
Bary Valentin
Kuh Ledesma
Jay-R
John Prats
Kris Lawrence
A Sharon Cuneta

Stage Director: Rowell Santiago

Musical Director: Alvin Dela Cruz / Choreographed by: George Lopez

Anniversary Concert
December 8, 2007, 8:00pm
Araneta Coliseum



A PRODUCTION OF ALV EVENTS INTERNATIONAL

TRIBAL GEAR PRESENTS "DUTDUTAN '07," a fusion of rock concert and tattoo competition, at the Philippine Trade and Training Center Hall B on Dec. 15. The Philippine Tattoo Artists Guild headed by president Ricky Sta. Ana has whipped up a show featuring fave bands like the Beatmatics, Concrete Sam, Cosmic Love, D-Cog, Greyhoundz, Kadangyan, Kamikaze, Nirskurt, Queso, Sinag, Sino-sikat, Slapshot, Urbandub and Valley of Chrome. Tickets are available at the gate and at Skinworkz Tattoo and Body Piercing Shop (D19, Carimor Arcade, Pasay City) Call 845-5001.

MONTAGE

'I Am Legend'

Will Smith's latest starrer, "I Am Legend," casts him as a brilliant scientist who finds himself the "only" survivor of a deadly, man-made virus. In time, however, he discovers that he is not alone—mutant victims of the plague lurk in the shadows, waiting for him to make a fatal mistake. Francis Lawrence ("Constantine") directs.

'Sali na Kami'

The RPN, IBC and NBN TV networks have coproduced a TV special, "Sali na Kami," in collaboration with Anak TV, to mark the International Children's Day of Broadcasting tomorrow. The special, which will be telecast at 6 p.m., stresses the importance of children in national and daily affairs. It features Mike Enriquez, Mike Cojuangco-Jaworski, Ricky Davao and Tintin Bersola-Babao, plus 24 gifted students from P. Bernardo and Aurora Quezon Elementary Schools, Multiple Intelligence International School and Benedictine International School.

COJUANGCO-JAWORSKI Will participate in Anak TV's special forum.

The TV forum delves into the thoughts and views of youth on the environment, technology, education and child discipline. Supporters include the National Council for Children's Television, MTRCB, Goldlocks and Columbia's.

'Winston in Concert'

From 1 p.m. to 1 a.m. on Dec. 14, music takes center stage at Ronda Verde, Julia Vargas, Ortigas, Pasig City for "Winston in Concert: The 5th Musicblast." There will be



SMITH. Plays a scientist in sci-fi thriller.

exhibits, music lessons, a sale of music-related products, and topnotch entertainment from the Bamboo, Kwan, Urbandub, Chicocci and Imago bands. Only for persons 18 years old and above.

Christmas at the Pen

The 24th Christmas Concert at the Pen will be held at 5 p.m. today, featuring the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, The Company and the UP Concert Chorus. Major sponsors are The Peninsula Manila and Stores Specialists Inc., purveyor of famous American and European designer labels in the Philippines.

CN Awards of Excellence

Cartoon Network has chosen the winners of its Awards of Excellence for 2007. For singing, Deanne May G. Igaya of Torres High School; for dancing, Campus Crew of Gen. Pio del Pilar National High School. In the Wild Card category, Faith S. Lagrimas of Makati Elementary School emerged victorious.

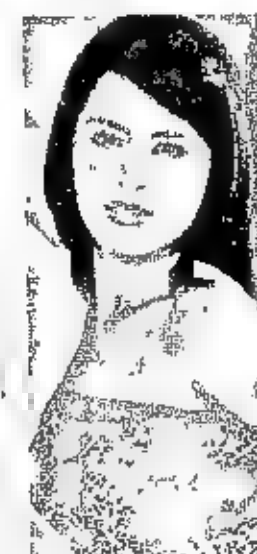
Movies on TV

On HBO today at 3 p.m., "The Bodyguard." Tomorrow at 7 a.m., "Ordinary People." Dec. 10 at 10 a.m., "Who's Harry Crumb?" Dec. 11 at 9 p.m., "Mrs. Harris." Dec. 12 at 9 p.m., "Babe: Pig in the City." Dec. 13 at 4:30 p.m., "Excalibur." Dec. 14 at 1 p.m., "Back to the Future 3."

On Cinemax today at 1 p.m., "The Manchurian Candidate." Tomorrow at 7 p.m., "The Lost Boys." Dec. 10 at 5 p.m., "Dog Day Afternoon." Dec. 11 at 11 a.m., "Funny Face." Dec. 12 at 3 p.m., "Tobruk." Dec. 13 at 7 a.m., "Anzio." Dec. 14 at 7 p.m., "The Temp."

Cyberpoint launch

Rhan Ramos, Mart Escudero and Chris Padilla were the special guests during the grand launch of Cyberpoint last Nov. 27 at Starmall Bidsa. Cyberpoint sells the latest gadgets, like digicams, MP3 and MP4 players, iPods and DVD players, at reasonable prices.



DANIEGA. Appears in sexy video.

Hotbabes and Mo

Popular deejay Mo Twister takes his controversial "Forbidden Questions" to the next level with the new video, "Hotbabes Gone Wild with Mo Twister." He challenges each of the Babes to a sizzling "Truth and Dare" session and presents them with a series of hot challenges.

The Hotbabes featured include Mau Taylor, Kanya Santos, Jennifer Lee, Gwen Garci, Myles Hernandez, Hazel Cabrera, Vanessa Khain, Carla Samonte, Sachie Sanders, Mara Daniega and Maricar dela



EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE				
GOLDEN COMPASS 12:55 2:25 3:20 4:50 5:45 8:10 9:40	BATANES 1:15 4:00 6:45 9:30	EASTERN PROMISES 12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:30	BEOWULF 1:35 4:10 6:45 9:20	GOLDEN COMPASS 1:55 4:20 6:45 9:10
THE KINGDOM 12:10 4:50 9:30	ONE MORE CHANCE 12:45 3:40 6:35 9:30	PASUKOB 1:50 4:20 6:50 9:20	HITMAN 2:30 7:10	ENCHANTED 1:45 4:20 6:55 9:30

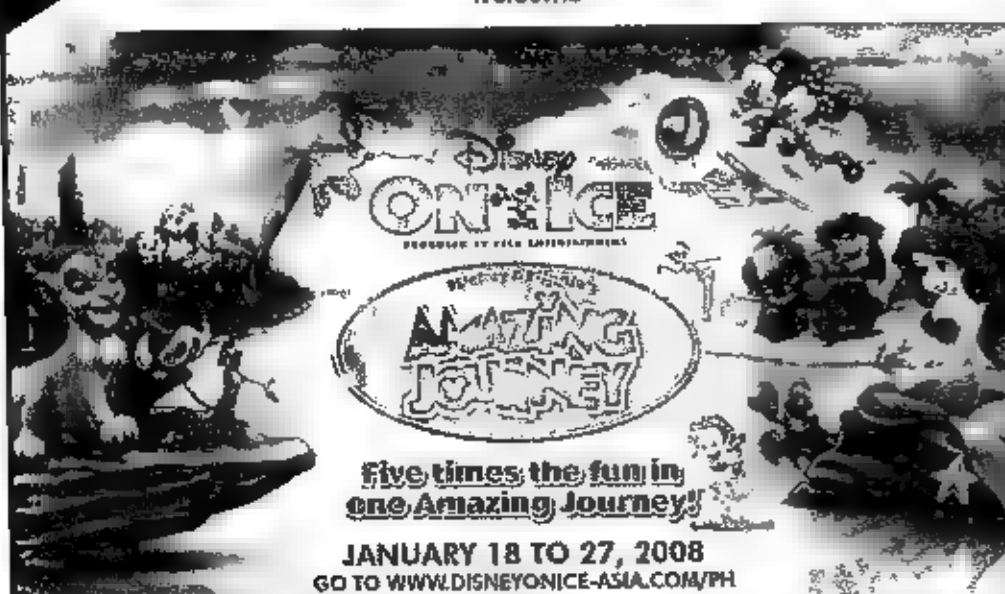
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Mortensen breathes life into Cronenberg's Oscar-worthy musings

By Rito P. Asilo

"Eastern Promises"

D: David Cronenberg
S: Viggo Mortensen, Naomi Watts, Armin Mueller Stahl

IF YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH David Cronenberg's cinematic oeuvre, you know how adept the 64-year-old Canadian filmmaker is at shocking, confusing, affecting or impressing viewers. The stories and themes that he chooses are as deeply cerebral as they are engagingly eclectic.

For their no-holds-barred realistic execution and immediacy, perhaps you'll even find the jarring images Cronenberg conjures up on the screen oddly entertaining and appropriate. Consider these titles: 1988's "Dead Ringers," 1996's "Crash," 2002's "Spider" and his most "mainstream" project yet, 2005's "A History of Violence"—you either love or hate them! "Eastern Promises," one of the year's best films, is no exception.

Cronenberg's riveting morality play follows the story of mysterious Russian-born driver, Nikolai

Lizhin (Viggo Mortensen), as it intersects with the life of midwife, Anna Khitrova (Naomi Watts), after the latter finds the diary of 14-year-old Tatiana—who dies during childbirth.

The dead teenager's journal, with text written in Russian, is Anna's only clue to the baby's lineage, and the reason behind Tatiana's untimely demise!

The lonely midwife's compassion and increasing curiosity lead her to Nikolai, who works for Vory V Zakone, a Russian brotherhood of mobsters headed by the charming Semyon (Armin Mueller Stahl) and his mentally unstable and closeted-gay son, Kirill (Vincent Cassel).

In no time, as Anna fends off the handsome driver's advances, she realizes that the erring father and son hold the key to the circumstances behind Tatiana's mysterious death! When Anna's Russian-raised uncle translates Tatiana's diary, its contents consequently put Anna in harm's way! But, where does Nikolai stand in all this?

Once again, Cronenberg weaves his disturbing tale with uncompromising vision. He pep-

pers his story with characters whose motivations are made ambiguous by their unfulfilled longings and amorality. Violence, as with the director's previous films, is a gut-wrenching fixture, but it's never gratuitous.

Showing as much commitment and conviction as Cronenberg is lead actor Mortensen, who masterfully captures the soul of the

mysterious protagonist. He holds the film together as he paces an outstanding cast (Watts, Mueller Stahl and the scary Cassel). They breathe life into the director's cerebral musings, and give their characters a sense of purpose.

Mortensen, who once figured in a controversial nude scene (in Sean Penn's 1991 directorial debut, "Indian Runner"), shows

some skin again in a protracted and bloody action sequence. Indeed, when Cronenberg and Mortensen collaborate, they really leave no stone unturned—and more!

In "Eastern Promises," as the filmmaker challenges mainstream cinema's storytelling conventions, he also examines the trend of migration as a way to al-

leviate poverty—an increasingly disturbing social concern that he utilizes as a backdrop to question his viewers' moral convictions.

By vivifying his unique perspective on things, Cronenberg's taut drama spins a relevant yarn that convinces his audience to look at life in a different light—and demonstrates why it deserves the Oscar buzz that it's getting!

Children find their voice in media

By Mag Cruz Hatol

IN MANY DEVELOPING countries, citizens under age 18 constitute half the population. It is regrettable, therefore, that meager resources are earmarked for them. Children are usually given a token role in governance—they play a negligible role in politics, and their voice is barely audible in media.

Scenario

It was amid this forlorn scenario that Unicef cooked up the International Children's Day of Broadcasting (ICDB) about a decade ago, in an attempt to underscore

VILLANUEVA.
Anak TV's
Batang
Broadcaster
winner.



the significant role that children play in national and global affairs.

ICDB soon evolved as a tool to explain and propagate the tenets of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. For a civilization that pins its hopes on the youth, it's necessary to allow them greater

CHILDREN/3

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FRED CLAU
G
12:10, 2:35, 5:00,
7:25, 9:50

THE GOLDEN
COMPASS
PG13
1:40, 4:10, 6:40, 9:10

ENCHANTED
G
12:30, 2:50, 5:10,
7:30, 9:50

THE KINGDOM
R13
12:30, 2:55, 5:20,
7:45, 10:10

EASTERN
PROMISES
R13
1:10, 3:25, 5:40,
7:55, 10:10

THE GOLDEN
COMPASS
PG13
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8:00, 10:30

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11 PASUKOB
12 BEOWULF

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2 BEOWULF
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
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7 NARS/ CARTOON NETWORK
8 EASTERN PROMISES
9 HITMAN
10 PASUKOB
11 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
12 BATANES

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0748

1 FRED CLAUDE
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4 HITMAN
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6 ENCHANTED
7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
8 BATANES
9 BEOWULF
10 THE KINGDOM
11 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
12 NARS/ CARTOON NETWORK

SM CITY BEVERLY 778-3055

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 PASUKOB
4 THE KINGDOM

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE KINGDOM
3 BATANES/ ENCHANTED
4 NARS/ CARTOON NETWORK
5 PASUKOB
6 ONE MORE CHANCE
SM CITY SUGAT 929-4873
1 BATANES
2 PASUKOB
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 THE KINGDOM

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6989

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 EASTERN PROMISES
5 PASUKOB
6 ENCHANTED
7 HITMAN
8 BEOWULF
9 NARS/ CARTOON NETWORK
SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BEOWULF
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
5 BATANES
6 PASUKOB
7 ENCHANTED
8 NARS/ CARTOON NETWORK
9 THE KINGDOM
10 HITMAN

SM SUPERCENTER MINTHUPA 862-5803

1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 GOLDEN COMPASS
3 THE KINGDOM
4 PASUKOB

SM CITY MANILA 823-8240

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE KINGDOM
3 EASTERN PROMISES
4 PASUKOB
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
7 BEOWULF
8 BATANES
9 NARS/ CARTOON NETWORK
10 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
11 HITMAN
12 ENCHANTED
SM VALENZUELA 283-3917
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BEOWULF
3 PASUKOB
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

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GALLERIA	
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS • THX 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00	6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 4:30 7:00 9:30	7 ENCHANTED 11:30 1:45 THE KINGDOM 4:00 6:15
3 indieSine: KONTRA AGOS	8 BATANES 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
4 EASTERN PROMISES 1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:40	9 ONE MORE CHANCE 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
5 PASUKOB	10 HITMAN 12:40 2:40 BEOWULF 4:45 7:15 9:45

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 11:20 1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40	6 THE KINGDOM 11:36 1:40 3:45 ENCHANTED 5:50 7:55 10:00
2 indieSine: TUKSO 12:55 2:40 4:25 6:10 7:55 9:40	7 PASUKOB 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:20 10:00
3 BEOWULF 12:00 2:10 4:20 HITMAN 6:35 8:20 10:00	1 EASTERN PROMISES 12:25 2:20 4:15 6:10 8:05 10:00
4 MR. MAGORIUM'S 12:30 2:15 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 4:40 7:00 9:25	2 BATANES 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
5 ONE MORE CHANCE 12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40	3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

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1 ENCHANTED 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00	5 BEOWULF 12:30 2:35 HITMAN 5:00 7:00 9:00
2 PASUKOB 12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10	6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 1:40 4:10 6:40
3 ONE MORE CHANCE 11:20 1:40 4:00 6:25 8:00	7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10
4 THE KINGDOM 12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00	8 BATANES 11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

NOVALICHES	
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 2 PASUKOB	3 ENCHANTED 4 BATANES

PIONEER	
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 PASUKOB 4 BATANES

STA. ROSA	LIPA
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 2 FRED CLAUDE 3 PASUKOB 4 BATANES	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 2 PASUKOB 3 LIONS FOR LAMBS 4 BATANES

DASMARINAS	IMUS
1 GAEM PLAN 2 HITMAN 3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 4 PASUKOB 5 BATANES	1 PASUKOB 2 THE KINGDOM 3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 4 BATANES

ANGELES	TARLAC
1 GAME PLAN 2 PASUKOB 3 BATANES 4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 2 BEOWULF 3 BATANES

STARMILLS	
1 ENCHANTED 2 BATANES 3 ONE MORE CHANCE	4 PASUKOB 5 GAME PLAN 6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

BACOLOD	LOLOLO
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 2 GAME PLAN 3 indieSine: KONTRA AGOS / PASUKOB 4 WE OWN THE NIGHT 5 LIONS FOR LAMB 6 BATANES	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 2 THE KINGDOM 3 PASUKOB 4 GAME PLAN 5 BATANES 6 WE OWN THE NIGHT

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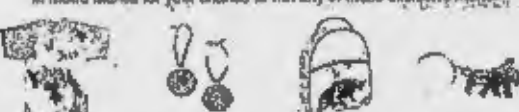


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5 BEOWULF
6 PASUKOB
7 BATANES
8 THE KINGDOM

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 PASUKOB/ FRED CLAUDE
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 THE KINGDOM/ BEOWULF

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1 PASUKOB
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 BATANES

SM CITY DASMARINAS 048-4293001-04

1 THE GAME PLAN
2 HITMAN
3 PASUKOB
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CITY NAVAS 082-2876398

1 HITMAN
2 NARS/ BATANES
3 PASUKOB
4 11TH HOUR/ CARTOON NETWORK
5 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 HITMAN
3 PASUKOB
4 BEOWULF

LUZON

SM CITY TAYAY 286-2502 to 04

1 PASUKOB
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 BATANES

SM CITY LIPA 043-784-0187

1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 PASUKOB
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY PAMPANGA 045-8837851-88

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE GAMEPLAN
3 BEOWULF/ CARTOON NETWORK
4 BATANES
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 PASUKOB

SM CITY STA. ROSA 040-0349911

1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 BATANES
3 FRED CLAUDE/ PASUKOB
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

VISAYAS

SM CITY CEBU 033-3209422

1 THE GAME PLAN
2 BATANES
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
5 ENCHANTED
6 THE KINGDOM
7 RESERVED
8 PASUKOB

SM CITY LUGENA 042-7108977-80

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 PASUKOB
4 HITMAN

SM CITY BAHAG 074-6197838-39

1 ENCHANTED/ LIONS FOR LAMBS
2 PASUKOB
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CITY CARR 046-826-6844-45

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ENCHANTED/ CARTOON NETWORK
3 THE GAME PLAN
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 PASUKOB
6 BATANES

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04

1 LIONS FOR LAMBS
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 PASUKOB

SM CITY CEBU 032-231-3876

1 HITMAN
2 ENCHANTED
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 THE NANNY DIARIES
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
7 PASUKOB
8 BATANES


SM CITY MACOR 034-708 1010

1 THE GAME PLAN
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 LIONS FOR LAMBS
4 PASUKOB

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2	ENCHANTED	2	THE GOLDENT COMPASS
3	BEOWULF / HITMAN	3	BATANES
4	THE KINGDOM		
PREMIER		Center Mall Cinema	
833PM THE GOLDEN COMPASS		Baguio Center Mall, Magwayway Avenue (Baguio City) tel (043) 257-2088	
		11:00PM FOR LAMBS / BEOWULF	
		2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS	
 <p>Cinema 2000 Watermark Mall Watermark Center, Colina Ridge Ave. c/o Antenna Ampo Pin del Plaza, Makati City tel 816-4274 / 816-4216</p>		 <p>Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887-5001 to 0</p>	
1	THE GOLDEN COMPASS	1	THE GOLDENT COMPASS
2	THE KINGDOM	2	BATANES
3	BATANES	3	PASUKOB
4	PASUKOB	4	GAME PLAY
		Centre Plaza Cinema	
		(Batangas, Batangas) tel (043) 257-2088	
1	THE GOLDEN COMPASS	1	PASUKOB
2	THE KINGDOM	2	BATANES
3	BATANES		
4	PASUKOB		
 <p>starmall Cebu</p>		 <p>PAWWOOD CINEMAS Cebu</p>	
(Davao City) tel. 720-0131		(Luzon City) Wala 2, Eastwood City 2, Westwood 2, Ave 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 tel 888-8888 / 888-8888	
3	THE GOLDEN COMPASS	1	ENCHANTED
4	BATANES	2	THE GOLDENT COMPASS
5	BATANES	3	THE GOLDENT COMPASS
		4	THE KINGDOM
 <p>metropolis star www.cinecitycity.com.ph</p>		 <p>CINEMA 200</p>	
(Alabang) tel. 880-4294, 843-3864		Movie Theatres of the New Niles	
1	BATANES	Cinema 2000 Watermark	
2	PASUKOB	(Cebu) tel (049) 545-733	
3	THE GOLDEN COMPASS	1	BATANES
4	BEOWULF	2	PASUKOB
		3	THE GOLDENT COMPASS
 <p>THEATRES Cebu</p>		Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall	
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS		(Bhayan) tel. (049) 411111	
2 PASUKOB		1	RESERVE
3 BATANES		2	RESERVE
		3	RESERVE
		4	RESERVE
 <p>PACIFIC MALL CINEMAGIC Pasig City</p>		Cinema 2000 Cinemagic	
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS		(Urdaneta) tel (075) 568-57	
2 PASUKOB		1	BATANES
		2	PASUKOB
		3	THE GOLDENT COMPASS
 <p>Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA Cebu</p>		Cinema 2000 Metrodome	
(Montinella) tel 850-3572 or 72		(Tarlac) tel (045) 982-17	
1	EASTERN PROMISES	1	BATANES
2	THE GOLDENT COMPASS	2	PASUKOB
3	PASUKOB / HITMAN	3	THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4	ENCHANTED	4	BEOWULF
5	THE GOLDENT COMPASS		
6	THE GOLDENT COMPASS		
7	THE KINGDOM		
8	RESERVED		
9	ONE MORE CHANCE		
10	BATANES		
 <p>Blue Wave Cinema Cebu</p>		Lianas Cinema	
Banting Highway c/o. Mayor G. Fernando Blvd, Sta. Mesa, Alabang City tel (041) 927		(Alabang) tel 850-3	
1	THE GOLDENT COMPASS	1	BATANES
2	BATANES	2	SARAH SA PAGI
3	THE GOLDENT COMPASS	3	LAT
4	PASUKOB	4	THE GOLDENT COMPASS
SUPER CINERAMA		Lianas Movie	
Istambul Cinemas Complex Recto tel 733-4228		(Cebu) tel (049) 545-733	
1	RESERVED	1	THE GOLDENT COMPASS
2	RESERVED	2	THE GOLDENT COMPASS
3	RESERVED	3	THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4	THE GOLDENT COMPASS	4	THE GOLDENT COMPASS
5	BATANES		



Lea Salonga in RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S CINDERELLA

Music by Richard Rodgers Book and Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

Adapted by Mark Waldrop
Directed by Bobby Garcia



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